

Sunday School Problems



Amos R. Wells

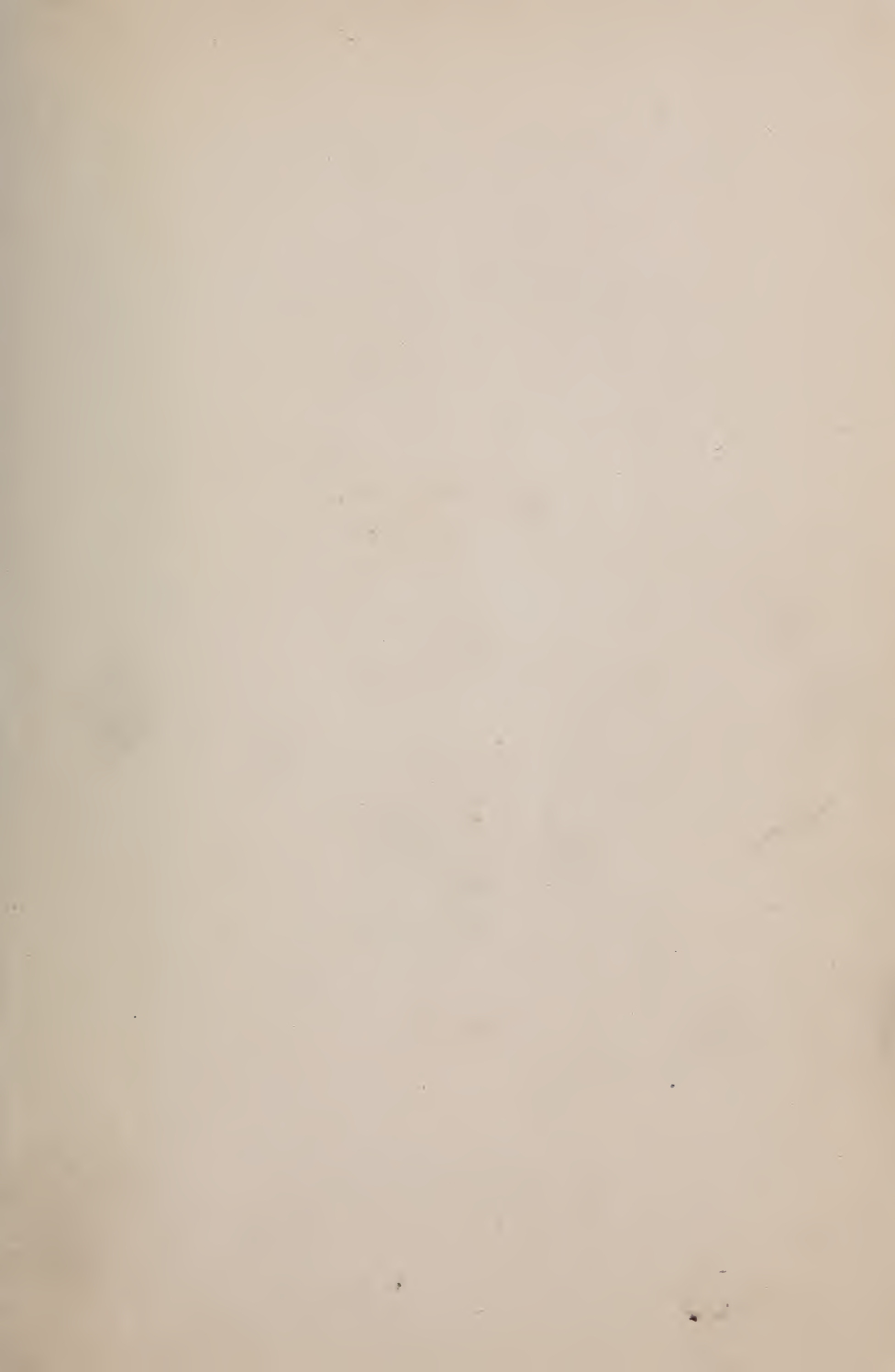


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Sunday-School Problems

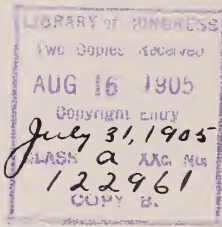
A Book of Practical Plans for Sunday-School Teachers and Officers

By AMOS R. WELLS

Author of "Sunday-School Success," "Three Years with the Children," "Studies in the Art of Illustration," etc.



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SUNDAY-SCHOOL PROBLEMS.

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PREFACE

If you are looking in this book for a systematic treatment of the subject, for big words and philosophical analyses, I am afraid you will be disappointed.

But if you want to know what practical Sunday-school workers have found helpful in solving the principal problems of their work, I hope you will be aided by these pages.

This book is a record of my thoughts and observations on the Sunday school during the past seven years. Its various chapters have already enjoyed, separately, a wide reading. They have appeared in *The New Century Teacher*, *The Sunday-School Times*, *The Pilgrim Teacher* (Congregational), *The Baptist Teacher*, *The Westminster Teacher* (Presbyterian), the publications of the British Sunday-School Union, and addresses before various Sunday-school conventions, the American Bible League, and the Religious Education Association.

Whatever may be said of those that discuss the Sunday school from the outside, I am sure that the actual teachers of the Sunday school are interested far less in theories and criticisms and profound disquisitions on "the Sunday-school movement," than in the very humble

but infinitely important question, how to get Bible wisdom into Tom Jones and Susie Brown. This book says nothing, I believe, about "the Sunday-school movement." It is just about Tom and Susie.

AMOS R. WELLS.

Boston.

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SUNDAY-SCHOOL PROBLEMS

CHAPTER I

HOW TO GET HOME STUDY

WHAT complaint is most frequently heard from the Sunday-school teacher? Undoubtedly this: "I can't get my scholars to study at home." And that is a pretty serious complaint, if the teacher desires to teach, and not merely to lecture; to educate, not harangue. Of course, much good may be done the scholars, and the school is well worth while, though Bibles are never opened at home, and all the class learns about the lesson is what their teacher tells them; but Sunday-school efficiency is doubled or quadrupled if home study prepares a foundation on which the teacher can build.

Creating an Appetite.—Nor is the object of home study merely to gain information; that is where many teachers fail in their efforts to obtain it. One important function of home work is to create a zest, an appetite, for the work of the school. No teacher will persuade his scholars to study the lesson by scolding them. In some way, home study must be made attractive. The element of play must enter it. We have none of the imperative motives which the secular schools can bring to bear upon their students, but must make up the lack by ingenuity and skill.

Plan for It.—It is essential, then, that the Sunday-school teacher plan carefully for the home study of his scholars, as carefully as for his own work in the class. Every week he should present some device, not always, though often, a different one. Beginning with slight, easy tasks, let him go on to more difficult work; but from the start—and here is where many teachers fail—it must be something quite definite, and something that is evidently worth while, no mere answering of a set of leading questions.

Follow It Up.—Any attempt to bring about home study will be useless unless it is followed up, regularly and persistently. Call for the results of it the first thing, at the beginning of every lesson. While home study is becoming a habit, it would be worth while to give each scholar a postal card, on which, the middle of the week, he will send the teacher a report of his work. A record of the scholars' faithfulness in this regard should be kept explicitly. Indeed, it will help greatly if this matter is recognized each Sunday in the secretary's report to the school, so that the scholars may know how many have studied at home the past week, and for what average and aggregate time, and what improvement is being made. At the end of the year, if such home work as I shall suggest is carried out, the school will have ample material for a notable exhibit, interesting to the entire church, and a fine advertisement for Bible-study.

Helps.—It is useless to require home study until the scholars have Bibles; and almost useless unless the Bibles are of clear, large type. If they are the Revision, the scholars' pathway will be wonderfully smoothed. But

they will also need the helps that come with a teacher's Bible, especially the atlas, the references, and the index. As to the concordance, that feature in a teacher's Bible is so condensed as to be more of an aggravation than an aid. By all means, every scholar that can afford a full concordance and a Bible dictionary should be induced to purchase them. For the others, a little class library may be kept in the most easily accessible place, and there should be found not only the books already mentioned, but good commentaries on the portion of Scripture the school is studying.

Does any one demur at the cost of this? Remember, the books will answer for years, and it is as foolish to attempt Biblical studies without text-books as to send your children to the secular schools without grammar, arithmetic, and geography.

Instruction in the use of these helps must be given. Few scholars know how to use the concordance or Bible index, or on what map of the atlas to look for a certain place, or even how to get the most out of their regular lesson helps. An entire session of the school might profitably be spent by the teacher in giving this necessary instruction and drill.

Plain Directions.—It is hardly possible to be too explicit in giving directions for home study. Fix a regular time for this work, so that each of the class may know that, when he sits down for his daily ten or fifteen minutes with the lesson, all the other members of the class, so far as possible, are at the same task. And give the scholars written programmes for their study, as:—

1. Intervening events and lesson proper (Bible.)

2. Place (atlas).
3. Time (lesson help).
4. Persons (Bible dictionary).
5. Events (commentary).
6. Teachings (lesson helps, etc.).
7. Scripture light (Bible index).

One of these points may be taken up on each of the seven days of the week, and the lesson may be studied in this order in the class. Such a programme, however, soon grows monotonous, and the scholars will become able to do this fundamental work more rapidly, leaving time, at home and in class, for more attractive advanced work such as I shall indicate.

If possible, interest the parents in this home study. Nothing will better promote the success of your class. In any event, it is an admirable plan for you, once each week, to study the lesson with one of your scholars, taking them in turn. Not only will you thus give them the most needed intellectual help, but you will get closer to their spiritual needs than in any other way. In addition, it will be a delightful stimulus if the scholars themselves meet occasionally at one of their homes, for an evening of study together.

Specimen Studies.—The nature of the special home studies, which are to add zest to your routine work, depends, of course, on what part of the Bible you are studying. If, for example, you are entering upon the life of Saul, set your class to preparing historical charts, showing the Hebrew kings in order, at distances proportioned to the lengths of their reigns. If you are beginning the life of Christ, interest your scholars in constructing

charts which will show in order all the recorded events of his life.

If the lessons lie in the Psalms, get the class to go through the entire book, prefixing a title to each Psalm, or classifying the Psalms under a few suitable heads, such as "Psalms of Praise." The lesson may be one of the miracles. Then have the scholars make a list of the Bible miracles that are akin to it, such as all miracles of healing. A parable may be the lesson theme. In that case the class may be set to writing paraphrases; or, if any are capable of the feat, they may be asked to tell the story in original verse.

A quarter's lessons lie in Genesis. Ask the scholars to read the entire book, finding a keyword for each chapter. A lesson from Proverbs may contain a maxim regarding money. Induce the scholars to collect the rest of the proverbs that discuss the use of wealth. The choice of the twelve disciples is the theme. Obtain, from this home study, lists of events and sayings which will exhibit all that the New Testament tells us concerning each disciple.

Give your work an air of completeness, of finality. For instance, with the first temperance lesson of the year let each scholar get (or make) a blank book, in which he will copy, during the four temperance lessons of the year, *all* that the Bible says on this theme. Or, you are beginning the lessons in the life of Samuel. Getting other blank books, the scholars will proceed to compile, as they go on, their own biographies of the great judge, gathering up whatever the Bible or the lesson helps say about him. In the same way the class will

make their own lives of Paul, putting in an account of each Epistle at the time when it was written. Some lessons taken from the minor prophets will give rise to another little book, one page being devoted to each of the twelve, the Bible dictionaries being ransacked for all known facts of their lives. At another time, as you draw near to the end of a series of Old Testament studies, the order may be: Prepare a list of all the principal characters of the Old Testament, in their chronological order. In such ways the scholars will be made to feel that they are actually achieving something, completing something.

One of the most profitable lines of home study is the correlation of the Bible, illustrating Scripture with Scripture, making the scholars familiar with the Bible as a whole and not merely with the fragments on their lesson leaves. Thus a lesson from a Bible address, such as that of Moses in Deuteronomy or that of Paul on Mars Hill, will suggest a study of all the orations of the Bible; and this study will extend over several Sabbaths, to be followed, at intervals, by similar studies of Bible poems, Bible letters, and the like. Similarly, the lesson on Elijah's ravens will bring about a search for Bible birds; and other lessons will lead you to study Bible fishes, trees, mountains, children, mothers, brothers, rivers, and like topics almost without end. With older scholars the object of exploration may be more ethical, and they may be asked to illustrate the main teaching of the next lesson, for instance, by three passages from other parts of the Bible. Or, for work with a still wider range, ask the scholars to bring in next Sunday, each of

them, a set of ten references obtained from reference Bibles and appropriate to the various sections of the lesson, the class to select, by vote, the references that seem on the whole to be the best. By such contrivances as these, frequently varied, you may attach your week's lesson to the rest of the Bible, and make your scholars feel that the entire sixty-six books are one Book.

As the teacher earnestly plans for home study, a great number of devices will occur to his mind. One of the best of these is **Bible marking**. Some simple system of indicating the subjects of verses, such as by significant letters in the margin,—P for prayer, S for sin, Sl for salvation,—prove sufficient to interest your scholars in hunting up correlated texts, and making their Bibles books that can be used.

Occasionally let the teacher prepare a set of questions on the lesson, a set quite full and difficult. Using some manifold device, prepare a copy for each scholar, as a guide and stimulus to home study. Occasionally, too, and perhaps better, get the scholars themselves to prepare at home sets of questions on the coming lesson, sending them to you by Friday, that you may use the questions on the coming Sunday.

Sometimes, at the beginning of the year, perhaps, let the teacher give each member of his class a blank book, saying, "This is your Duty Book. I want you to write out in it, each week, in the course of your home study, a statement of the duty or duties the lesson inculcates. Bring these books to the class, so that we may compare notes."

Many classes will be interested in making their own

Bible commentaries. For this purpose they will need a lot of blank paper of uniform size. Cutting out the lesson text from their lesson leaves or quarterlies, they will paste it on one of these sheets, writing beneath whatever explanation is needed, prefixing verse numbers to each point taken up. They will be interested in this work in proportion as they are faithful to it, and see it growing till it promises to cover the whole Bible.

If you have many lessons from a single book, as from one of the Gospels, get each scholar to print the name of the book on a blank book, and write inside a running analysis of the chapters. Be sure to have in each book a title page and a preface, the latter to contain an account of the author and the circumstances under which the book was written.

Sometimes ask the class to bring, written out, analyses of the current lesson made under the following heads: Time; Place; Connection; Chief person; Subordinate persons; Chief event; Subordinate event; Chief teaching; Subordinate teaching. Use this order in the class discussion.

Often let a review be part of the home study. To insure this you might ask the class, for instance, to write out, and hand or send to you during the week, a full statement of the teachings of the lesson just studied.

I do not think that acrostics are generally practically helpful, though *if the scholars themselves prepare them* they will promote home study. I do believe, however, in the preparation of diagrams showing the succession of historical events, reigns of kings, and the like, and especially do I believe in home-made maps; for example, a

map showing Christ's journeys, a different color for each journey, the events being indicated by numbers with marginal explanations ; or a similar map for Paul's journeys, or one for the various travels and events of Moses' life, or one for the various exiles.

Quite a different line of work, promotive of home study, is **the search for illustrations** of the lesson truths. It may be a temperance lesson ; send the class to study the newspapers for illustrations. At other times urge them to bring you illustrations from biography, history, the annals of missions.

Bible scrap-books will prove useful in stimulating home study. They will be receptacles for maps and diagrams, for all pictures illustrating the Bible, and for photographs of famous paintings of Biblical subjects. If there is a place for such a collection it is astonishing how rapidly it will grow, and interest in it will grow with equal rapidity.

I have named a variety of methods for promoting home study, and yet I have only begun ; for, like any other line of endeavor, skill in this work and abundance of plans are the fruit of sincere attempts and persistency. We can obtain home study if we want it, and if we will add to our desires a measure of ingenuity, energy, and perseverance.

CHAPTER II

THE LAST FIVE MINUTES

IN many Sunday schools it is the custom to ring a signal bell five minutes before the close of the teaching. Whether he like it or not, that bell marks a crisis in the teacher's work. The test of his teaching has come. Now or never he must manage those finishing touches which in the case of his pedagogic effort, as of a statue or a poem, ally it to the endless years, or, failing, send it to the refuse heap of all poor work.

How Not to Do It.—Those precious five minutes must never be spent on Sunday-school mechanics,—collecting the pennies, making announcements, distributing the library books or papers. These should all have been cleared out of the way.

Nor should this climactic time be spent upon any minor detail of the lesson. No matter what interesting fact you leave out, no matter what bright anecdote or telling point you omit, go at once to the main teaching of the lesson, and during those five minutes drive it home.

Yet you will not succeed if you allow an uneasy sense of hurry to dissipate your attention and that of your scholars. They must not be made to feel, "Only five minutes more!" but, "Now for the best!" If anything, proceed more deliberately than before, since a sense of leisure is necessary for the wisest teaching and the surest learning.

Especially, have a carefully matured plan for those last five minutes. If the half-hour's teaching has given you a sudden inspiration for your close, and you are certain it is worth following, follow it; but such inspirations are far more likely to come if you are prepared against their not coming. For instance, just when that warning bell rings, some anecdote appropriate to the lesson will catch the attention of your scholars and withdraw it from the thought of time; but you must have it ready in reserve, as a part of your lesson plan.

Not with Homilies.—The most common use of the last five minutes is in exhortation. That is almost always a mistake. Restless with the half-hour's steady thought, the class will not be appreciative of sermonettes. It is necessary, if you would hold their attention, to give them something to do. If you can set them to work, and make their own activity of hand and mind draw together the lesson thoughts into some rememberable whole, you will have set a worthy and workmanlike seal on your teaching. It seemed to me that I could not furnish more practical help in this chapter than by suggesting perhaps a dozen ways of doing this.

1. Give each member of the class a slip of paper, and ask them to **sum up the teaching** of the lesson in a single word—or in two words, three, or ten, as seems best. After all are done, each will read his summary, and you will state which seems the best, and why.

2. Place on the blackboard—and always a large block of paper will answer, if you have no blackboard—some symbol of the lesson. It may be a diagram, a simple picture, a mere acrostic. Explain it briefly; then hand

out pencils and paper and have the symbol copied, and the copies taken home as souvenirs of the lesson. If the paper you give out for this purpose is heavy, and neatly cut into some pretty shape, it will be more likely to be kept.

3. Distribute among the scholars **brief quotations** from well-known writers bearing on the great truth of the lesson. These will be read aloud one by one, and you will comment, very briefly, on each.

4. Get the class to **question you** on the events of the lesson, and urge them to press in the queries as rapidly as possible, while you make your answers brisk and brief. At the close, you yourself will ask the one important question, forcing home the lesson truth upon their consciences.

5. Show the class **some beautiful picture** previously concealed, such a picture as Holman Hunt's "The Shadow of the Cross." Get them to tell you what idea is brought out by the artist.

6. A very impressive method of closing is to give each scholar a **personal note**, fitting the lesson to his special need. Have these notes read in silence, and then ask that all heads be bowed while you offer a short closing prayer.

7. Every teacher should have his own **collection of poems**, especially chosen for their helpfulness in illustrating Scripture themes. Choosing from this collection the one best adapted to impress the lesson of the hour, place it in large script before the class, or dictate it line by line, while they copy it. Ask them to commit it to memory at home, and be sure at the next meeting of the class to have the poem recited.

8. Prepare a set of questions covering the ground of the lesson. Make them as crisp and interesting as possible. Write them in plain, large script on a big sheet of paper, which you will hang before the class as soon as the five-minute bell rings. Furnish the scholars with pencils and paper, and bid them see who can answer correctly the most of the questions before the close of the five minutes.

9. Print or write on a large sheet of paper some beautiful hymn or some fine prose quotation suitable to the lesson. Unroll it suddenly and place it before the class. Say a word about the author, if you know any fact of his life that adds force to the extract. Then get the class to read the quotation in concert, softly, and again and again, till the thought has thoroughly entered their minds. Close with silent prayer, all heads bowed, the petition being that God will make that truth a part of their lives.

10. Having determined what central teaching you wish to impress, examine carefully the past week of your life, and see if you have not had some experience which illustrates that truth. Study in the same way your scholars' lives, so far as you know them or can imagine them, and search out similarly illuminating experiences. Recall the news of the week, with the purpose of discovering some prominent event that brings out the main teaching of the lesson. From one or more of these sources you can doubtless glean an anecdote that will rivet the attention of the class for these concluding five minutes, and fasten the lesson truth in their minds better than a half-hour's homily.

11. Teachers, especially of the younger classes, should make **collections of well-told stories** that point useful morals. They will serve as standing models for the teacher's style, and also will help by direct use. Choosing one of these that is suitable, spend the last five minutes in reading it before the class (or get one of the class to read it), asking the scholars to listen intently and write out their remembrance of the story as soon as they get home. Give them stamped and directed envelopes in which to mail to you these stories during the week, that you may examine them and read the best before the class on the next Sabbath.

12. Appoint one member of the class to take your place in front, and **submit to be questioned** on the lesson by all the class. As soon as he misses a question, appoint another to take his place, and so on. As the five minutes draw near their close, tell the class that you also want to ask a question, the most important question of all; and then proceed briefly to bring out, by a single heart-searching query, the truth you wish chiefly to impress.

13. All of the foregoing plans elicit the interested cooperation of the class; but you will gain and hold their attention very effectively if you can **persuade some good speaker to "drop in"** on the class just as the warning bell rings, and talk to your scholars for five minutes on the topic which you have made your central theme. The class will accept a homily from a fresh speaker when they would not accept it from you.

It will be seen that, if you are to make such thorough plans for these last five minutes, you must not be cheated

of them. The superintendent must understand that for no reason are they to be abbreviated. The warning bell and the closing bell must come with most "dependable" regularity.

The ideal use of these five minutes will do five things, —one for each minute. 1. It will grip your scholars' attention, and hold it in defiance of all distractions. 2. It will concisely review the lesson. 3. It will bring it to a climax, a rememberable point. 4. It will apply this central truth to the heart-life of the scholars. 5. It will send them away stimulated, pleased, and wanting to come again. Thus treated, the last five minutes will be the eagerly anticipated crown of the entire session.

Indeed, I might fittingly compare these final five minutes to the arrow-head with its barbs, whereby the arrow makes a permanent conquest. And if I have given too complicated directions for fashioning the arrow-head, I hasten to remind the teacher that only one method, or even a part of one method, is to be applied at once, and continued till it becomes easy and familiar. Your last five minutes may not be pedagogically perfect; but if you realize their importance and do your best, they will grow constantly in attractiveness and force; and, anyway, even a clumsy arrow-head is better than a headless arrow.

CHAPTER III

WHAT TO DO WITH BACKWARD SCHOLARS

THE backward scholar is the teacher's test. If the teacher brings the backward scholar forward, he is the teacher's triumph. "What thank have ye" if ye make only bright scholars learn? "What do ye more than others?"

Sympathy.—I suppose the first requirement, if a teacher would help a backward scholar, is that he be sympathetic. You cannot greatly help any scholar, still less a dull one, until you believe in him, and show him that you believe in him. Remember Sir Walter Scott, and all the rest of the long line of brilliant men and women who were stupid children. Recognize diversities of gifts, and remember that not all children are cast in the same mold. Courage will be half of progress for the backward scholar, and your courage will be more than half of his.

Comradeship.—Though you are on terms of comradeship with no others of your class, you must be on such terms with the dull scholar. Your immediate pleasure would lead you to have more to do with the more attractive pupil, so that you will need to be on your guard here. Your personal leadership must move the backward scholar forward, and he will not follow your leading unless he likes you.

And so it is a good plan to invite the less ready scholar to your own house, to study the lesson with you; or, go

to his house for this partnership study. You can show him how to study better in this way than any other, and that is the first thing he has to learn. Besides, with every such lesson you can come into more intimate acquaintance with him.

Along this line, however, the aid of some one of his own age will be worth more than yours. Children quite invariably learn more readily from one another than from their elders—a principle too often left out of sight in secular as well as religious instruction. And so, if you can naturally bring it about, get the brighter scholars to study the lessons with the duller ones. To show them how, have at your home occasional jolly “study bees” for the whole class, and then for some weeks set them to studying two by two, the duller with the brighter so far as you can arrange it, the younger with the older.

There is one great advantage in going to the backward scholar's home to study with him,—you thus become familiar with his home surroundings. Many a poor scholar could be transformed into an excellent one if you could obtain the cooperation of his parents. No teacher can work very long in the homes of his scholars without waxing zealous for a home department of the Sunday school. Establish such a department, make a special effort to obtain the membership of the duller scholars' parents, persistently urge the study of the lesson as a united family, and as by magic your stupid scholars will be changed into earnest and effective pupils.

I have spoken about the need of sympathy with the backward scholar, such sympathy as this intimate knowledge will beget. **A backward scholar should never be**

scolded, in the class or out of it. He should never be told that he is backward. He should never be allowed even himself to admit that his abilities are less than his comrades'. Progress will be made through a feeling, not of inferiority, but of power. If you want your scholars to work you must fill them, not with shame, but with interest.

Begin with His Best Point.—Find out, therefore, what the backward scholar can do most easily and well, and develop that first. Get him to help you make ready for teaching the lesson. He may be a good penman. Get him to copy out the little question slips or outline slips you hand each scholar as a guide to the next week's study. He may be a fair reader. Find some interesting paragraph or brief article or poem on the lesson, or some phase of it, and have him read it before the class, previously reading it at home. He may enjoy drawing and be measurably expert at it. Set him to preparing some diagram or chart or map for you, or even, if he is sufficiently skilful, get him to copy a picture of some Biblical landscape. He may have many friends. Interest him in the work of obtaining new scholars. He may be ready of speech. Ask him to exhibit to the class a picture or a series of pictures in some book, accompanying them with running comments.

Set Him Definite Tasks.—Give him a single question to study during the week and answer the next Sunday. Assign to him a single verse of the lesson, and tell him that you and the class will look to him, and to him alone, for information on that verse. Give him a single anecdote or other illustration of the lesson theme, and ask him to

read it or tell it, and apply it to the lesson. Have him write out the lesson story in his own words, and read this paraphrase as an introduction to the next Sunday's study.

Form a definite aim in your own mind for the backward scholar, some little goal in view, the actual attainment of which will comfort you with assurance of progress. This goal may be his mastery of a simple outline of the quarter's history, his grasp of a single great truth from the quarter's lessons, his retention of the main facts of a single life, or his ability to take part in a single phase of the class work. Tell him what is your aim for him. Devise some ledger or form of account by which he can measure and record his growth from Sabbath to Sabbath. In estimating him never judge him by others, but by himself, bearing distinctly in mind his initial dulness, and judging his advance from that.

Especially, **praise the backward scholar** just as soon as you honestly can, and just as much and as frequently as you honestly can. Praise is the sunshine to his growing. Get others to praise him also. Show them the map he has drawn, the chart he has made, the little essay he has written; and if he is not present, be sure to repeat to him their commendation.

In all your class work with the backward scholar, **put yourself in his place**. Try to imagine his mental gropings. For his sake be very clear, even on points that seem to you to be self-evident. The fullest of explanations and the most persistent of reviews will not be an injury to the rest of the class. Many children seem to know more than they actually, on thorough exam-

ination, do know ; and the presence of backward scholars may thus become a blessing to the brightest students.

For this reason, especially, I would not transfer the dull scholar to a lower class, however clear it is that an error was made in placing him where he is. His Bible study may be spoiled for life by the shame of such a lowering in rank. Of course, I would not retain a backward scholar where his presence would seriously retard the progress of others, but, in our flexible Sunday-school work, that need never be feared.

It may be an advantage, however, to **try another teacher** with your backward scholar, and with that end in view it would be well to effect an exchange of classes, some Sunday, with some teacher quite different from yourself. She may discover the secret of your failure, if you have failed, and be able to suggest to you ways of developing the child that you would never have thought of. In the same spirit, the day-school teacher should be consulted, and from his course with the backward scholar, and his fuller knowledge, born of longer observation than your poor hour a week can give you, he will be able very certainly to aid you in your difficult task. Humility is one of the true teacher's prime virtues,—the willingness to learn from others.

Indeed, is any price, of lowliness, painstaking, or patience, too great to pay for the awakening of an immortal soul? And when the end is gained, and the backward scholar has become a good Bible student, skilled in Christian truth and even able to lead others, will any road seem too long that you have traveled to reach that goal?

CHAPTER IV

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE LESSON HOUR IS CUT SHORT

ONE of the great advantages the secular schools possess over the Sunday schools is their uniform teaching periods. The secular teacher knows what time he has to develop the lesson. He is not likely to be interrupted, and he is certain that his time will not be cut short. Indeed, he would not tolerate other conditions.

How Our Teaching Time is Cut Short.—In Sunday schools, on the contrary, there are a number of causes that may lessen the time for teaching. If the school is held after the morning services, whatever prolongs them will delay its opening, and part of the time thus lost is likely to be taken out of the teaching period. The scholars may be slow in arriving, or even the superintendent may be late. The opening exercises may be unduly prolonged by many causes. There may be some visitor, who is asked to “make a few remarks” to the school; and “a few” is woefully indefinite! There may be new music to practise for a special occasion, and this time is unwisely taken for the purpose. Your school may be blessed (?) with a talking superintendent, who confuses the superintendent’s desk with a pulpit, and must have his little homily though the proper business of the school, the Bible lesson, is crowded out into the cold. Or, you may have the dilatory superintendent, or the fussy superintendent, or the drawing superintendent, any one

of whom is good for ten minutes a Sunday stolen from the lesson hour. Finally, a threatening storm, or various other causes, may cut short the hour at the end.

There is no excuse for most of these abbreviations of the teaching time, and in the majority of cases the teachers should provide against the recurrence of the abuse by protests at the teachers' meeting or in private. Generally, the singing or other opening exercises should be cut short rather than the lesson. Very seldom is it wise to ask any one to address the school, and never should any one that is destitute of the grace of brevity be given such an opportunity of disastrous dulness.

However, times will come when even the shrewdest superintendent is obliged to cut short the lesson hour. If he knows what is coming, he will give notice to the teachers as long in advance as possible—on the previous Sunday, or at the beginning of the session. Sometimes he cannot do even this.

The problem, then, is a real perplexity. The difficulty is one that spoils many lessons in many schools. No one plan is adequate to meet it, but I must name many points which the teacher should bear in mind in this emergency.

A Short Plan.—Of course, if advance notice is given, the teacher can form a short plan for his lesson. He can lay out a set of clear-cut questions. He can go through them briskly. He may surprise himself with time to go through them again.

Usually, however, there is no such notice, but, to your dismay, the superintendent comes around, as you are just fairly started, and says, "Sorry, but we'll have to close

in ten minutes," and is off to the next class. *Then* what's to be done?

Be Cheerful.—Well, meet the emergency with a smile. It is a notable test of your pedagogical resources. If you can come forth victorious from a suddenly shortened lesson hour, you can conquer almost any other difficulty of the teacher's art.

Do not allow a feeling of dismay and of uselessness to possess you. Do not say to yourself, "Only ten minutes!" Say rather to yourself, "Now for six hundred precious seconds!" Unless the scholars already know it, do not admit them into the secret that the teaching time has been abbreviated. Certainly do not let them guess it from your manner. Do not appear hurried, for that will spoil the effect of your work. Many a soul has been won for Christ in ten minutes. For all we know, it required no longer than that to win each of the twelve apostles. Ten minutes—why, they are a small eternity!

Your "**At Least.**"—Just the same, in spite of philosophy, it is far better to have your course of procedure thoroughly mapped out beforehand. And so I think that every lesson should be studied by the teacher with a view both to a long plan and to a short plan. That is, every preparation a teacher makes should have an "at least" section. So much, *at least*, must be taught—these few facts, this one truth.

A lesson that is thus planned in sections need not be taught in a scrappy way. Indeed, it is much more likely to be presented as a well-balanced whole. You will have gained that **sense of proportion** which is so

large a part of wise teaching. You will have recognized the essentials of the lesson, and placed them in their rightful supremacy over the incidentals. For instance, you will not be likely, in teaching about the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment, to spend half the lesson time in discussing the fashion of Oriental robes.

Recognize Limitations.—It is a great thing for a teacher to recognize limitations, and not try to do more than under the circumstances can be well done. Here are scholars more or less ignorant and stupid. Here is a lesson more or less beyond their comprehension. Here are distractions around them. Here is a cramped recitation period. It will save you a deal of discouragement and will render your teaching far more effective if you will plan your lesson simply, with only one or two clear-cut, easily attained ends in view; in other words, if you will plan it for a possible cutting short of the lesson hour.

Just Three Points.—And so I would have a regular schedule, an "at least" schedule, for each lesson. Three points. Three points only. First, just what happened. Second, the effect of this happening on the principal characters and on history. Third, what it all has to do with our own lives. The routine work—taking the collection, making the record of attendance, perhaps even the distribution of the papers—I would have done at the very beginning of the lesson hour, and out of the way. Then I would plunge at once, first into the review, and then into the three fundamentals of the new lesson, just as I have outlined them.

After these three points have been presented, and you

are sure the class have mastered them thoroughly, take up the subordinate points,—the details of customs that are not essential to an understanding of the main points, the non-essential phrases and sentences in the text that require explanation, and the minor applications to modern life. This would be an anticlimax? Yes, if you should stop here; but a few minutes should always be left at the end of the lesson, that you may bring up again the central teaching, and send your scholars away with that ringing in their heads.

Such experiences as this article refers to are likely to make one understand the advantages of written questions. I do not mean the printed questions on the lesson leaves, though those are far better than they used to be; but I mean your very own questions, carefully thought out, framed with brightness and variety, and precisely adapted to the needs of your class. Though I should always write out such questions, for it is the best of practice, I should not ordinarily read them; but if you have in your pocket such a list of questions, how fine they will be to fall back upon when the demand comes for a swift close of the lesson! Whip them out, introduce them with *éclat* as a novel exercise, read them briskly, and the class will be delighted with the change. Very likely you will be able to go over the entire list a second time before the superintendent summons the school to close.

Come Quickly to the Point.—At any rate, whatever method you adopt, get to the central point of the lesson as soon as you can. (Not every teacher, alas! knows what that central point is.) Whatever little

difficulties arise, whatever questions on non-essentials are asked, postpone them to the end of the lesson or promise to answer them after the session. Ask the hardest questions of the brightest scholars. Expedite matters in every way. Oil the wheels of the lesson.

But do not, for the sake of saving time, leave out the little touches by which you hoped to get the lesson remembered. That striking illustration, that clear-cut diagram, that illuminating picture,—be sure to get these in. Don't leave the class with the skeleton of the lesson; clothe it with flesh and blood. Remember: there is absolutely no use in teaching at all, except as your teaching is remembered.

The Application to Life.—Therefore, be sure to make the application. It is by the application that a lesson *goes*, just as it is by the applied postage stamp that a letter goes. It is never enough to get a lesson into the head—that is what the secular schools do; you must get it into the heart, if yours is to be a Sunday school.

For there is no Bible lesson, no matter how hurried and brief, but may save a soul. Plan every week for that blessed end. Expect it every week. Remember how that discouraged minister came to Spurgeon and complained because after years of preaching he could point to only three or four converts. "Why, man alive!" exclaimed the modern apostle, "you don't expect to save a soul every time you preach, do you?" "Why, no, of course not," answered the minister. "That's why you don't," said Spurgeon.

So that, if you have the story of the brazen serpent to teach, and less time than usual at your disposal, you will

of course be sure that your scholars have the outline of the event,—where the Israelites were, whither they were bound, what peril beset them, and how they were saved from the peril; but you will not tarry long over the route through the desert, or the exact kind of snakes that bit the Israelites, for you will be eager to get to Christ, who, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, has been lifted up on the saving cross. You will give them the drink of water, and then, if there is time, they may examine the pattern of the glass.

Do Not Make a Ragged Stop.—That is one fault of most abbreviated lessons. Round out your task in a workmanlike manner. You may be discussing a triviality when the warning signal comes. Break off at once and return to the great heart of the lesson. Let the last words be of that resplendent truth.

But stop, anyway, when the rest of the school stops. No truth you may be teaching is so valuable as the example of prompt obedience.

And then, when you reach home, think it all over, see just how you did it, and meditate how you may do it better when next such an emergency arises. This retrospect and examination are well bestowed upon every lesson, but they are doubly necessary and valuable when the lesson hour has been cut short.

CHAPTER V

THE GOOD OF GOALS

WHEN I went to college the military drill of the students was conducted at one time by an irascible German drill sergeant. He had no mercy, either on our aching muscles or on our addled wits. He delighted in tricks to trap the unwary. Well do I remember how he would have us load our muskets, and then in measured, sonorous tones would give the command:

“Make ready—take aim ——”

Then he would pause. In the pause some heedless and impatient gun would be sure to go off. Outwardly disgusted, but inwardly, I have no doubt, chuckling gleefully, our sergeant would growl:

“*Vy* don't you vinish *aiming*?”

Aimless Work.—That is a capital question for the Sunday-school teacher to ask himself, often and emphatically. So much of our Sunday-school work is aimless. We fire loud-voiced rounds, but the bullets have no billets. This chapter is to urge the establishment of goals, and to indicate what some of those goals should be.

Every walker knows how much farther he can go, and how much more easily, when he is walking somewhither than when he is strolling aimlessly. Any worker knows how gloriously his labor is promoted by a division into stints. A chapter a day, for the writer, and the book gets done. A seam a day for the busy housewife, and

the dress gets readily made. One point a decade for the statesman, and his nation advances to an empire. Division of labor among workmen has accomplished miracles of progress, but equally important is division of a task for a single laborer.

The Satisfaction of Accomplishment.—And not only is more work done when stints are measured off and goals set up, but the work is done with more zest. We are not stupefied by the leagues ahead, but the end of our present journey is only a few rods distant. The mountain has reduced itself to shovelfuls, the impossible has become feasible. We leap and dance, for our work has become play.

And after we have reached the goal, though we know another goal is before us, what a pleasant sense of achievement! Though what we have done is little, it is done, it is behind us, it is not to be done over again. If “nothing succeeds like success,” it is also true that no spur to fresh endeavor is equal to past accomplishment.

One reason why so little home study is done in preparation for Sunday-school lessons is because teachers so seldom give their scholars definite objects for study. The pupils are set down in a labyrinth, and no clew is placed in their hands. They are willing, most of them; but even where there is a will there is not always a way, or, at least, a visible one.

Say to your class: “Next Sunday I want each of you to bring me a list of the twelve leading events in the life of Elisha, and put them as nearly as you can in chronological order.” Tell them where to read in Kings and

Chronicles, and you will have the best lesson on Elisha you ever heard recited.

Say to your class: "Next Sunday we have the parable of the prodigal son. I want each of you to read it carefully, and write out and bring in a statement of the different lessons you think it teaches." Let them mark the parable in their Bibles, to make sure they can find it. Give them each a sheet of paper—a *small* sheet of paper—on which the teachings of the parable are to be written. You will be measurably sure of some thought on that lesson, and of a good recitation.

Say to your class: "It's a temperance lesson next Sunday. I think that, with a little study, you can bring in complete lists of the Bible passages that teach temperance." Show them how to use concordance and Bible index, and tell them how fine it will be to *finish* one Bible subject, actually to master it. You will touch high-water mark in that temperance lesson.

Thus for each lesson you will set up a different goal, a goal related to the very heart of the lesson, something definite to be aimed at in the studying, and a clearly marked road thither. There is no other way to get home study than this; there is no other way to get clear, brisk recitations.

A Goal for Each Quarter.—At the beginning of every quarter, as at the beginning of every week, a goal should be set up. It will link all the lessons together with a purposeful enthusiasm. It will make a rememberable whole of what would otherwise be thirteen haphazard pieces.

Let it be a feasible goal, not so easy as to require no

effort, nor so difficult as to stupefy effort. It must be ahead of the scholar, or it is no goal; it must not be out of reach, or again it is no goal.

For example, if you are studying the life of Christ, fix as a goal the ability to name all the recorded events in that life in chronological order. Few in the school,—young or old—can now do this. Perhaps none. But the task is well within the reach of all but the youngest.

Or, if all the quarter's lessons lie within one book of the Bible, establish the purpose to give each chapter of the book a title appropriate to the contents, and commit these names to memory, with frequent drills in finding, by the use of that key, any subject that is treated in the book.

Or, if the lessons deal with the kings of Israel and Judah, draw two parallel lines, and set up as your goal that the class shall become able to mark off upon those lines, in order, the reigns of the kings of the two kingdoms, giving each its appropriate length and marking upon each the principal events in the history.

If you are studying the Acts or the Epistles, aim in the same way to make an outline of events, inserting each Epistle in its proper place in Paul's life.

The goal you set up will depend, of course, on the age and ability of your class, whether it shall be near or far away, and reached by an uphill road or a level. This, however, will be true of all classes: that the quarter's goal must be simple, definite, reachable, and touching all the lessons at their central points.

So far as possible, let the quarter's goals of all the classes be the same. Teachers and scholars can then

compare notes and spur one another on. School tests of progress are possible, and pleasant emulation that is out of the question where the goals are heterogeneous.

Definite Goals.—There is danger that in fixing on your goal you will not make it clear to your own mind, and therefore you cannot hope to make it clear to the minds of the children. Write down in black and white what the goal shall be. Write it out for your class as well as for yourself. Go to the goal yourself, before you announce it, and examine every foot of the way thither, just as a surveyor makes what he calls a “preliminary reconnoissance” with pacing and pocket compass before he goes over the ground with chain and theodolite.

Graphic Presentations.—This definiteness which is the great gain of goals is distinctly enhanced by some graphic presentation of the object in view. For example, if you want the scholars to learn the events of Elijah’s life, have them make outline maps of Palestine, extended from Zarephath to Sinai, and place figures 1, 2, 3, etc., at the points that are the scenes of the successive events. Frequent reviews, both with and without the maps, will fix them in the memory.

Do not be afraid of tests, nor even of written examinations. If the scholars have actually made definite progress, they will be proudly eager to prove their gains. Sunday schools will not balk at written examinations when their work ceases to be chaotic and becomes systematic.

Do not mistake a goal that you set up for yourself, and think it is necessarily therefore your scholars’ goal.

Do not rest till they have adopted it with their interest and desire.

Yes, even after this has happened, the teacher must hold his class to their aim. Determinations easily flag. There are many other goals to confuse, outside the Sunday school. The teacher must often be his scholars' persistence. Do not allow the goal to fall out of sight a single Sunday. Speak of it often. Advertise it ingeniously. Insist upon it.

Especially, put into this goal-pursuit **the zest of a game**. Sometimes you can wisely introduce friendly contests, half the class against the other half. Sometimes you can wisely offer a suitable reward, one that can be gained by all who attain a certain standard of excellence. But whatever spur you use, manifestly enjoy the work yourself, and your scholars are quite certain to enjoy it with you.

Cheer the young workers by noting the progress they make all along the way. Interest their parents in the endeavor the children are making, and get their help toward the goal. And when the end is reached, arrange some jubilee to signalize the achievement. Perhaps it will be formal exercises on review day, with essays, and with specially invited guests. Perhaps, if the goal has meant the construction of maps or diagrams or the like, it will be an exhibition of these where all the church may see. The superintendent will announce to the school what has been accomplished. The pastor may even rejoice over it in his sermon.

Cumulative Goals.—The goals of successive quarters, thus bravely won, should, if possible, themselves be

linked together. To this end a long look ahead must be taken, over the lessons of an entire year. Select such goals that the work may be cumulative. Fix on a succession of goals of cognate interest—historical, biographical, doctrinal—and thus bind the year's study into a unit. This is not always possible; but it is a fine thing where it is possible.

Goals for the School.—Thus far the scholars in their classes. But all I have said about the value of definite goals and the wise way of seeking them, applies equally well to the school as a whole. Whatever you wish the school to achieve, superintendent, break it up into small, precise tasks, and set them before the school as special aims for accomplishment within given times.

These goals will be as diverse as the needs of the schools. Perhaps it will be an endeavor to persuade all to bring their Bibles to school. At the opening of every session, then, have all the Bibles in the school held up, while the class treasurers count them, and report their number when the collection is reported. Announce the number at the close of the school, with earnest comment on the increase or decrease. Keep a blackboard notice before the school, with figures on the point for a number of Sundays. Stick to your aim till you are sure that all the scholars have formed the habit of bringing their Bibles; then celebrate your triumph, and set up a new goal.

That new goal may be a one hundred per cent. enlargement of your school. Note the preciseness; not an enlargement, but a one-hundred-per-cent. enlargement, or whatever definite increase seems feasible. Place a va-

cant chair by the side of each scholar, and let it remain there until the scholar fills it with a recruit. Report every Sunday the number of chairs filled for the first time, and the number that remain to be filled. Draw on the blackboard one hundred squares, and fill them up with white or red as each chair is filled. And finally, when all are occupied, hold a jubilee!

Perhaps your goal is promptness. You may give each scholar a number, and number a series of badges arranged on a board with hooks, that is placed at the entrance. As each scholar enters he takes the badge bearing his number, and pins it on. But the badges are removed as soon as the school is opened, so that late comers wear no badge and are counted by the secretary. The badges are collected in baskets as the scholars pass out. This is continued till the happy month when, through all its weeks, every scholar has worn the badge. Then you celebrate your victory, and set up another goal.

There are many more goals for which the entire school may strive,—that all may sing, that the contributions may reach a certain average, that the library books may be read to a certain extent, that a certain proportion of scholars may be reported as having studied the lesson at home at least an hour each week, that perfect order shall immediately follow the superintendent's lifting of his hand at the opening of the school,—ah, there are so many ways in which our schools may be improved, so many goals yet to reach!

Goals for Teachers and Officers.—Nor are these goals, so useful for the scholars, one whit less valuable for officers and teachers. That we will maintain a teachers,

meeting this year, and always be present when possible—what a goal is that, crowned with what regal possibilities! That we will have regular cabinet meetings—meetings of pastor, superintendent, and officers—another magnificent goal. That every teacher will try to win for Christ this year every scholar of his class—the best goal of all.

And, finally, there are certain goals of the inner life that must be set up in the heart of each man or woman who is seeking Sunday-school success. The goal of a perfect motive—that I will come to do this thing, not from a sense of duty nor with any selfish or half-selfish aim, but solely because I love Christ and love his children. The goal of preparation—that I will spend half an hour a day on my lesson. The goal of personality—that I will become a friend, an intimate, of each of my scholars. The goal of a wider vision—that I will attend so many Sunday-school conventions this year, read such and such books and teachers' helps. The goal of pedagogy—that I will overcome this defect of manner, win this grace or skill of the perfect teacher. Yes, yes; how goal adds itself to goal, a new one blessedly rising to view just as we reach the cynosure of past endeavor!

For it is the rule of the Christian life—this rule of goals. It governs all progress along all lines of Christian effort. Every goal is a golden milestone along the road to the New Jerusalem. Therefore, "forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forward to the things that are before, let us press toward each goal, for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

CHAPTER VI

WHAT TO DO WITH THE DISORDERLY SCHOLAR

IF the teacher has disorderly scholars in his class, the lesson is constantly perched on an active volcano. At any moment there may be an explosion, and the lesson will be torn to fragments or buried in débris. There is no assurance of either pleasure or profit in a class that is subject to disorder. Yes, and if there is disorder in your class, there is not much hope for the class next to you. If order is heaven's first law (as it is), it is certainly the first law of that heavenly thing, the Sunday school.

Disorder is always a result, for which, somewhere, there is a cause. Don't doctor symptoms. Discover what is at the bottom of the disorder, and remedy that.

The disorder may be due only to the overflowing vitality of the boys and girls. In that case, take a leaf from the secular schools and try a bit of calisthenics just before the lesson is taught.

It may be due to bad air. Open the windows.

It may all spring from some mischievous scholar. Quell him or expel him.

It may be due (more than likely—saving your presence—it *is* due) to unskilful teaching. Then learn your trade.

The Start.—Certainly, with almost no exceptions, an interested class is an orderly one. Much depends upon the way you start out, and no part of the lesson deserves

such careful planning as the first three sentences. If you begin in a hesitant, apologetic, faint-hearted way, you have thrown up your case at the outset. If you begin with some surprising statement, or some brisk question, or with the holding up of some object or picture, you will hook the most lively attention before it has time to wriggle out of the way.

Much depends also on how you continue, after you have thus started out. **Keep things moving.** Moving objects hold the eye, and a lesson that progresses swiftly (if not *too* swiftly) holds the mind. By careful preparation come to be at home in the lesson, so that you can range through it with easy freedom. Get a goal, and leap toward it. Your class will run eagerly alongside.

Much depends also upon **the expression of your face.** A bright, quick eye, a mouth all ready to smile, a face mobile to every changing thought and responsive to every thought of the scholars, will attract and hold your class. A putty face, heavy and listless, will put them to sleep—or to mischief.

And much depends upon **the voice**,—whether it is rasping or flabby, or, perchance, is loving, cheery, and vibrant. On the whole, the right kind of voice is the teacher's most important exterior assistant. Some teachers can do more with a restless class by the one word "Now" (and any other word will do), than many teachers by a half hour's exhortation.

Hand-Work.—Whatever qualities the teacher may possess, however, she must count as her best ally in the preservation of order the scholars' own hands. Provide some work for them. Hand-work affords usually the

best avenue for instruction, as well as the best remedy for disorder.

This hand-work will vary, of course, with the lesson. Sometimes it will be the copying of an outline map or the drawing of a map from memory. Sometimes it will be a diagram that is copied, or a tabular outline of the lesson. Sometimes the teacher will read slowly a list of questions that call for very brief answers, and the class will be busied writing the answers. Sometimes, if your scholars are old enough, they may be set to copying some outline picture of a simple object, such as an Oriental lamp. Sometimes they may be persuaded to write paraphrases of the lesson text, or statements of the lesson teachings. One exercise of this kind, calling for hand-work, I would introduce into every lesson, planning for it long ahead. It will prove a sovereign remedy for disorder.

Work at Home.—Sometimes it will be necessary to do personal work with some particularly irrepressible scholar. You must get into helpful and close relations with him. Go to his house. Invite him to tea at your house. Try raspberry jam as a lubricant. Never threaten him without carrying out your threat; better, never threaten him at all. *Scolding disorder is like spreading mustard on a burn. Devise some occupation for the restless one. Many a shrewd teacher has taken the worst boy in his class and made him class sergeant to keep order; and he has kept it. Such a scholar, too, is just the one to take up the class collection, keep the class records, clean the blackboard (if you luckily—or enterprisingly—have one), and aid the teacher in drawing

maps and making diagrams for her teaching operations.

Getting Help.—Rarely, and yet sometimes, the teacher will find it wise to get assistance in subduing the disorderly scholar. If the other scholars can be trusted, quietly appeal to them to help maintain order and not to join in any pranks that may be started. If the superintendent is a wise man, call in his aid. Perhaps a few sentences from him, with the boy apart, will end the whole struggle. If the parents are wise (that is, if they really look at their child with seeing eyes), tell them frankly about his misdemeanors, and secretly conspire with them to make him what he should be.

For classes that are old enough to carry out the plan, try throwing upon them the responsibility of self-government. A class organization—constitution, president, committees, and all the rest—has a beautifully steady influence. A committee on order, nominated and elected by the scholars themselves, will by that very process of election be rendered almost unnecessary. This plan is in harmony with the self-governing methods that have been found so useful in various secular schools.

Finally, but most important of all, try to cultivate in your class a spirit of reverence for sacred places and holy themes. I know of no better way of doing this than by a brief prayer just before the lesson, all heads being bowed while the teacher asks the divine blessing upon the class and upon the truths that are to be studied. Nor would it be at all out of place for the teacher to pause, even in the middle of the lesson, at

some solemn and impressive point, and request the class to bow their heads in silent prayer, asking God to impress the truth upon their minds and help them to carry it out in their lives. If the tone of the class is such that this moment of prayer would come naturally and easily, there need be no fear of disorder.

The Superintendent's Responsibility.—Much of what I have said will apply equally well to the order of the entire school; and yet of course this requires a little different treatment from the class, and I must next address the superintendent. We must remember that disorder breeds disorder. A school that is allowed to be disorderly at the opening will be disorderly when it separates into classes, and class disorder means a disorderly close, when the school comes together again.

To get order in a school, one must begin **before the school begins**. With delightful zeal, the children are likely to be over-prompt. When the school, as in so many places, is held just after the morning service, the grown-ups are still in church, and those children that did not go to church have the schoolroom to their riotous selves. No matter where or when the school is held, some older person should be in the schoolroom half an hour before the opening. If I were the superintendent, I should want to be there myself, ready for consultation with any officer or teacher, and eager to take advantage of any chance of becoming acquainted with the scholars. If this at any time is difficult or inexpedient, I should appoint some one else to this service, or perhaps a succession of persons, each taking the task for a month. Moreover, the trouble may be greatly diminished by urging

the children not to come so long beforehand, and the parents not to send them over-soon.

Whoever superintends these early comers must have something provided to occupy their time. Mere forcible repression will only insure a postponement of disorder. Perhaps the best aid is a book full of pictures, each of which requires a little explanation. Or a collection of photographs from Bible lands may be used with fine effect.

The second necessity, if one would have an orderly school, is that the school **begin on time**. I deprecate the use of a call-bell. It should be enough simply for the superintendent to step to the platform and raise his hand. If teachers and scholars are taught to watch for the signal and respond to it instantly with perfect order, the drill and the weekly obedience will prove one of the greatest gains that come from the entire work of the school.

This initial quiet should have a well-understood purpose. What better than prayer, **silent prayer** with bowed heads for God's presence and blessing? Print a brief form for it, and hang it before the school for the use of the younger scholars, and as a constant model for this unvoiced petition. At the close of this moment of silent prayer, without prelude except the sounding of the chord, let the school sing softly some stanza of a familiar hymn, which may be changed from month to month or from quarter to quarter.

A regular and brisk order of service helps much to make an orderly school. Pack it full of things for the scholars to do. Leave little room for the superintendent,

secretary, or any other officer. The talking superintendent is a recognized Sunday-school peril. Let him talk up the school in private, and not talk it—down—in public. In Mr. Wanamaker's great school the young folks are kept constantly eager for their part. Now they must say, "Good-morning, Mr. Wanamaker." Now they must hold up their Bibles. Now they must sing. Now they must read in concert. The opening exercises are an animated drill, and no one has time to grow fidgety.

It is very necessary, if an order of exercises is to be carried out in an orderly way, that there should be no gaps in it, no pauses while the superintendent is finding his place in the Bible, or consulting with some other officer, or while the secretary is feeling in his pockets for some announcement he intends to read. Such gaps are like holes in a fence, through which a whole drove of mischiefs is likely to leap. If the superintendent, with a strong voice, a decisive air, and thorough preparation of all details, passes swiftly from point to point of his programme, he will sweep the school along with him in perfect and beautiful order.

Locate the Trouble.—In spite, however, of all these precautions, some particularly unruly scholar or set of scholars may persist in disturbing the school. The trouble will radiate out, and first of all it will be necessary to locate its source, and deal with that especial class or scholar. Too often the mistake is made of scolding the entire school for what is really the fault of a very few, and the school speedily resents this injustice.

The first step is always for the superintendent to speak to the teacher. It is *his* business to preserve order in his

own precinct; never take his work out of his hands till he has proved himself incompetent. Sometimes, instead of speaking to the one teacher, it will be sufficient to give an indirect hint through a general talk at the teachers' meeting on the subject of disorder, and the teachers' responsibility for it.

Failing the teachers' effective action, the next step is for the superintendent to deal directly with the offending scholars; never by a public reprimand, which is more than likely to fix them in opposition to the rule of the school, but by private exhortation.

If even this proves useless, the third step is a call upon the parents, a frank statement of the condition of affairs, the child himself being present, and a loving, manly appeal for their assistance in the matter.

The last remedy, of course, is expulsion; and I am persuaded that, long before the need for that arises, the other remedies I have named will prove efficacious.

Getting Authority.—The Sunday school may be made as orderly as the secular schools. It will not be as easy, because in the secular schools the teacher is backed up by legal authority. But authority may be obtained for the Sunday-school superintendent and teachers. It is to be won from the parents. Get them to visit the school often. Their presence will of itself transform many a turbulent scholar. Better, enlist them among the regular members of the school. A disorderly scholar whose parents are interested and regular participants in the school work, is indeed a rare bird. As the parents come in touch with the needs of the school and understand the aims of the teachers, they will gradually become ready

and eager to back up the officers and teachers with whatever authority they need to reprove, correct, and discipline. The parents will be added to the superintendent's staff; they will become his orderlies.

CHAPTER VII

IS THE GOLDEN TEXT WORTH WHILE?

YES, if it is used ; no, if it isn't.

The golden text takes space in our lesson helps. It costs time and thought to select it. It means trouble and expense all along the line. I have a feeling that comparatively few teachers use it, and that only a few of those few use it in such a way that it amounts to anything. Now, if it is worth while, let us change all this ; and if it isn't worth while, let us frankly abolish it.

It is worth while.

In the first place, it is worth while to **commit it to memory**. I have just gone over the golden texts for the present year. Four out of the fifty-two, though for other reasons wisely chosen, are not sufficiently pointed outside their immediate application, and not worth committing to memory ; they are merely fragments of narrative. The remaining forty-eight, however, are precisely the kind of verses we wish to store up in our minds and those of our children. There is far too little committing to memory of Scripture nowadays, and this use alone of the golden texts would warrant their selection.

Especially would it be well to fix upon the mind **the chapter and verse numbers**. A little extra labor and pains will effect this, and the value of a scripture quotation is quite doubled if you can give its exact location. Many of the golden texts are chosen from distant parts

of the Bible, and in considering them you have frequent opportunities to show the unity of the Book, and exhibit the beautiful interlocking of its parts.

Review Them.—This use of the golden texts necessitates frequent reviews of them. The verses and their locations will speedily slip from your scholars' minds otherwise. A brisk review of the golden texts might be made the opening exercise in your class, and it would answer, in part at least, for that review of former lessons which is so necessary if you would gain permanent results.

Indeed, the golden texts of the quarter make an admirable backbone for review day. Each text is usually the key to its lesson. The selection is sometimes open to criticism, but what isn't? Certainly, though *we* might be better pleased with the set of golden texts that you and I might select, that satisfaction would not extend to the Sunday-school world.

Use the texts, then, from week to week, keeping review day in mind. When that day comes, a good mode of utilizing them is to write them on cards, have the scholars draw them, and then let each scholar tell what he remembers about the lesson whose golden text he holds. If you intend to use this plan, announce it at the very beginning of the quarter, and urge your pupils, through all the three months, to work for the success of the little exercise.

Unless in some such way as this the use of the golden text is planned for, you will probably not use it at all. But include it in your lesson scheme, and devise unhackneyed ways of introducing it.

In the David and Jonathan lesson, for instance, you have brought out the beautiful story, and you have concluded by showing how much finer even the noblest human friendship will be if it is knit together by Christ. Then you close by calling for the golden text: "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Or, the lesson is Paul's shipwreck, and you begin by asking the class to repeat together the golden text: "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses." "Now that was written," you will say, "a thousand years before the event we are to study about to-day, but you will see how perfectly it describes what happened to Paul."

Do not rest satisfied with one repetition of the text, though, in concert. Call for it from different scholars. Refer to it in many connections. Go back to it again and again. Whenever the thought is in your judgment the fundamental thought of the lesson, build up your teaching around it.

Home-Made Cards.—One way to draw attention to the golden text is to assign it each week to a different scholar, making the assignment several weeks in advance, and having each text printed by the scholar on a large card, to be hung before the class during the recitation. These cards may be printed in colors. It may even be possible to get the scholars to decorate them with drawings of flowers or of symbolic designs, or with pretty bits of color or more appropriate pictures cut from periodicals and pasted on. The children will enjoy doing this work, and they will be quite as deeply interested also in the efforts of the others.

This may be considered too elaborate a plan, but certainly the scholars may be persuaded to bring to the class—all of them—the golden text written by them on slips of paper. The teacher will examine them, and give especial praise to the neatest and most accurate.

This suggests the use of golden text cards as rewards for attendance, punctuality, and good lessons. If the teacher cannot afford to buy the published colored cards, she may make her own, and put into them a personality that the published cards, admirable as they are, necessarily lack. She may write them on prettily colored paper, those for each lesson on a new color. She may print them in fancy lettering. She may adorn them with colored designs, and with painted flowers. Now and then, she may write on the back a personal message, sent right into the heart life of some particular scholar.

To many of these plans, a golden-text book is an appropriate sequel. It consists of these cards, or slips of paper, or whatever you use, pasted on larger leaves, and finally bound together in neat little books. At the end of the year your golden-text books should be placed on exhibition, for all the school to enjoy, and imitate next year.

In the Open Sessions.—And finally, how may we use the golden text in the open sessions of the school? Whatever use is made of it should come at the close of the lesson hour, so as not to interfere with the teachers' plans. Some superintendents have it beautifully printed upon the back of a blackboard, in ornamental lettering made with colored chalk. Any class whose members

came to school able, every one of them, to write out the golden text, may delegate one of their number to go forward and turn this blackboard, exhibiting the design, at the same time repeating the text, which the school will immediately repeat in concert. Then the superintendent may tell a brief (a very brief) story illuminating the golden text, or he may have the school sing a golden-text song, some hymn chosen because it treats the theme of the text.

Perhaps I have indicated with sufficient fulness some of the many ways in which the golden text may be used to add variety and interest to our Sabbath-school lessons. As you begin with the plans I have outlined, other plans will constantly suggest themselves. By the end of the year, through these wonderful condensations of truth, you will have fixed **fifty-two miniatures** of Bible events and lessons upon the gallery walls of your scholars' minds. Fifty-two Bible sentences, each freighted with the significance of a Bible incident or glorious passage—surely this, if anything in the world, is worth while.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TEACHER'S MANNER

THERE is the *what*—but there is also the *how*. Most teachers think of *what* they are to teach, but few think of *how* they will teach it. The one is no less important than the other.

Indeed, teaching has this in common with all the other fine arts, that manner often overranks matter. The painter's choice of a subject is less important than the way he depicts it, so that men would rather possess a broken pitcher delineated by Raphael than a "Coliseum by Moonlight" after the manner of Sam Spatterpaint. And surely when the theme is the loftiest of all possible themes, as it is in our Sunday-school classes, there is double urgency to present it in a manner as attractive and as noble.

Children are Imitators.—Moreover, let those teachers that are careless regarding their style of teaching consider how certainly, if they are at all successful in winning their scholars, the manners which they exhibit will be reflected in those scholars' lives. Children are true Chinese in their certainty of imitation. It is even startling to note, in the scholars of a popular teacher, the identical gestures, intonations, phrases, and mannerisms used by their unconscious model. Listening the other day to a series of recitations by the class of Mrs. F. E.

Clark, that magnetic woman, the wife of the founder of Christian Endeavor societies, I could shut my eyes and scarcely persuade myself that it was not she herself who was speaking.

Manners are the middlemen that carry the products of your heart and brain to the hungry markets of your scholars' lives. The old saying has it, "Manners makyth men"; that is, a man's fortune depends on his manners. It might as truthfully be said, "Manners makyth—other men." The teacher that is careless in regard to his manner of teaching is like a farmer shoveling seed into the soil, anyway, anywhere, and to any depth, provided the seed gets in and gets covered up; and the harvest is as scanty in the one case as in the other.

Before I give my thought of what the teacher's manner should be, let me say what it should not be. Five negatives.

1. It Should not be Flabby.—If the teacher evidently does "not care whether school keeps or not," one can hardly expect the scholars to entertain eager opinions on that subject. If the teacher appears bored, the class may well yawn. No matter how cleverly tuned your violin, you will draw no harmony from the instrument with a loose-screwed bow.

2. It Should not be Apologetic.—"I haven't had time to study the lesson," "I'm afraid you all know more about the lesson than I do to-day,"—such admissions are weak, unnecessary, and harmful. Do not advertise your delinquencies. Teach as well as you can, and apologize by a well-prepared lesson next week.

3. It Should not be Fretted.—A worried countenance

and anxious manners are poor arguments for Christianity and poor baits for your scholars' attention.

4. **It Should not be Fussy.**—Some teachers remind me of those young mothers that frantically trot their babies up and down to still their cries, adding all of their own nervousness to the poor infant's abundant supply. Such teachers fumble their books and lesson leaves incessantly, fly from this scholar to that with snatches of restless inquiry, bustle around the school-room for dashes of consultation with officers and teachers, and miss no opportunity to create confusion. Their classes will be pandemoniums and their teaching will be hodge-podge.

5. **It Should not be Jack-in-the-Box-y.**—Some teachers mistake jerkiness for energy, and explosiveness for pointedness. They fire off their questions like rockets. They dash off their explanations like a fire-engine in full career. They fling out their fingers in excited gestures. This is being animated, they think; but it is only being nervous.

The teacher's manner should be very different from all this. Perhaps its most important quality is confidence. Napoleon won his battles largely because he was so sublimely sure that he would win them. A lion-tamer, or a child-tamer, is obeyed because he expects to be obeyed. If you can put into your pedagogic bearing the quiet assurance of coming success, that success is half yours at the outset.

An accompaniment of this characteristic is frankness, openness. A good teacher always looks his scholars straight in the eye. He talks in a cordial, free way, as if he were telling all his heart. He does not stammer, shift, falter, or act like an embarrassed school-boy. He

puts his class at their ease by being himself at his ease. He wins their confidences by giving his own. He is not over-familiar, but he is a comrade. He is not trivial, but he is cheery. He is not a teacher ; he is a friend.

And lastly,—for the chief excellencies of a teacher's manner are three,—he will observe the often-heard injunction, and “look alive.” Too many teachers look dead. The level tones of their drowsy voices proceed from bodies almost as immobile as statues. The true teacher will “look alive” as to his hands, with an occasional irresistible gesture. He will “look alive” as to his face, for face gestures are the most expressive of all. Chiefly, he will “look alive” as to his eyes, which will kindle with enthusiasm, melt with tenderness, and sparkle with fun. Life springs only from life, and lively looks are both the evidence of life in the speaker and the provocative of life in the listener.

How to Get the Right Manner.—Finally, having thus sketched my thought of the teacher's manner, as it should not be and as it should, let me suggest how the best manner of teaching may be obtained.

In the first place, “know yourself.” I would not have you become self-conscious ; but manners are to be judged by results, and if you are not getting the results of the best manner, it is necessary to see whether you do not lack the manner itself. For instance, if your class is stupid, consider whether you are brisk. If the class is restless, you may be nervous. If the class is careless, you may not appear sufficiently in earnest. Manners are the flowers of certain seeds. If you lack the flowers, plant the seeds. If, on the other hand, you are obtaining

already the results of a good manner, take no more thought about it.

If I were a proverb-monger, I might say, "Every man his own manners," so essential is it that manners should spring from the real character of a man. "I must be myself," is generally the answer when defects of manner are pointed out; to which the proper reply is, "Yes; but you can change yourself."

One of the best ways to get a good manner is to borrow it from others. Such appropriation impoverishes nobody. Visit the classes of successful teachers. Watch those whom the children love. See what there is in their characters that is lacking from yours. Then try to reproduce it, *within* and *without*.

One Point of Manners at a Time.—If you conclude that you are not vivacious enough, work for months at that fault, until it is remedied. Growth is easy, where revolution may be impossible.

No one can teach in the best way without good health. A sound body goes far toward good cheer, and good cheer goes far toward mental alertness and sanity. I am quite sure, for example, that the efficiency of our Sunday schools would be vastly increased if all the teachers would take a brisk walk before entering on their duties.

As to that confidence and zest in the work which is so necessary for success, it rests at bottom on thorough knowledge and full preparation. If you have a first-rate plan for the lesson, you will be eager to present it, and you will go before the class a master of the situation. Enjoy your work, and you will look as if you enjoyed it.

Be interested in the class, and your eyes cannot lack lustre. Know the importance of your task, and your voice cannot lack earnestness. Pray before you teach and as you teach, and you cannot teach flippantly or heedlessly. Fear God, and you will not fear your class, or be embarrassed before them. Become the kind of teacher you wish to appear, and your manner outside the class will not belie your manner before your scholars. In short, the only secret of manners is being; and if you get a soul that is on fire for truth, if you become a lover of God and of all God's children, if you fashion as a receptacle for that love of truth, of man, and of God, the beautiful casket of a well-trained mind in a vigorous body,—if you do these things, your teaching will of necessity become ardent, courageous, and winsome, and many will be the jewels of your crown.

CHAPTER IX

A GOOD SUNDAY-SCHOOL PATCH

THE absence of a regular Sunday-school teacher makes a sad rent, there is no doubt about it. However excellent a substitute teacher may be, he is only a patch. It isn't pleasant to be patched, nor is it pleasant to be a patch; but it can't be helped, and this chapter is to make the best of it.

A Corps of Substitutes.—Of course, if yours is a model Sunday school, you have business-like arrangements for this emergency. Your superintendent has enrolled a regular corps of possible substitutes, men and women who have agreed always to be ready to fill vacancies. The assistant superintendents have lists of these. The Sunday-school committee of the young people's society sometimes has the whole matter in charge. Sometimes this committee organizes a special class, whose members study each Sunday the lesson of the next week, in order to be ready for the substitute's post. The teachers should be taught that it is their duty to notify the proper official of their expected absence. All of these provisions will be made in a model Sunday school.

But, alas! few Sunday schools are models; and even in the model schools, the best laid plans find themselves often defeated. Usually the substitute teacher is pressed into the service, not as part of a well-thought-out system,

but at desperate haphazard; and the question is, what shall he do? I will try to answer that question.

In the first place, be jolly about it. I would enlarge the proverb: *Bis dat qui cito dat—et suaviter*. You may be certain that the absent teacher has no good excuse for absence, or that warning could have been given in time for ample preparation on the substitute's part, or that classes might just as well be put together (though you acknowledge that this process generally spoils both classes); and you may consider yourself a much-abused mortal in being asked to teach that class. But postpone such considerations. The superintendent probably isn't to blame, and certainly the waiting children are not. Is it your duty to teach that class? If so, it is your duty to accept the duty pleasantly, and remedy the faulty conditions, if you can, afterward.

Let us suppose that your conscience is in good working order, and that you consent to be a Sunday-school patch. At once several essentials of a good patch present themselves for your imitation.

Imprimis, a Good Patch is Never Conspicuous.—Modesty is the first grace of a substitute teacher. Indeed, the very word, "substitute," conveys a hint toward humility, since it comes from two Latin words signifying to "stand under," to be subordinate. The substitute teacher must not be a red patch on a gray garment. His teaching must merge into the teaching that has gone before and is to follow after—that is, it must do this as nearly as a different personality, working hastily and in the dark, can do it. Not wholly in the dark, however. You know the characteristics of the teacher whose place

you are taking. Probably you know his methods. You can ask the class at the outset whether any plan had been set for the lesson. So far as you can, you will fit in; will make a chameleon of yourself, and adapt your color to your temporary abode.

Then, in the second place, to return to our comparison, a patch must not draw. That was the point of the Saviour's parable about unshrunk cloth in an old garment. You must not make it harder for the regular worker, but easier. You must not criticise him, even by the vaguest implication. Children are quick to see disparagement. If he is a dull teacher and you are a brilliant one, it would be Christlike (is it too much to ask from human nature?) if you would moderate your brilliancy for the occasion. And if you can drop a word of hearty praise for the absent teacher, it will wonderfully smooth his pathway when he comes back.

For a final point of comparison, a good patch must not be careless. No basting-stitches. No rough edges. No evidences of haste. Do you remember Grizel's works of art? (I hope you have read *Barrie*!) Take her marvelous patching as your Sunday-school model.

Really, there is no reason why a Christian, fairly well equipped with Bible knowledge, should go before a class of boys and girls with shamefaced apologies, and with that trite phrase, "*You* must teach *me* to-day, children," which means a discount of fifty per cent. in the children's estimation. If you must be a patch, be a silk one; not even a patch need lack distinction.

You know you are likely to be summoned as a substitute teacher. You have already held that honorable post

perhaps a dozen times. **Why not plan for it?** This may be your only chance at influencing those immortal souls. It is worth more thought than you can give it during your walk from your chair to theirs. Your only wise course is to be ready with a few general schemes, which will fit any lesson ; then you will have nothing to do but carry out one of them.

Here are a few devices that will be found useful.

1. Get the class to read the lesson text, verse about ; but before the reading ask one member of the class to watch for references to persons, another to pick out allusions to places, a third to make a mental list of events, a fourth to decide what is the principal teaching of the lesson, a fifth to do the same, a sixth to select the verse best worth committing to memory. Then go over these points, one at a time, using for your chief reference in each case the scholar to whom that topic has been assigned, but bringing in the rest of the class with a free conversation. Finally, review, changing the assignments about.

2. Tear up a sheet of paper, making slips, on each of which you will write the number of one of the verses of the lesson. Have the class read the lesson text, and then let the scholars draw these slips at random. Each scholar is to be questioned on the verse whose number he draws, and the rest of the scholars are warned to listen carefully, because, as they are told, after the lesson is once discussed in this way, the slips are to be mixed up and drawn again, and the same questions are to be asked once more, a record being kept this time of the number of questions each scholar answers correctly and the number he misses.

3. Read the lesson text, verse about. Then the class will question the teacher, each scholar asking questions on only one verse. After all the verses are discussed, the teacher takes his turn, and returns over the same ground, catechizing the scholars.

The substitute teacher may safely launch out on any of these plans, only seeing to it that he does not use the same plan with the same class on two successive occasions.

After his half-hour task is done, and the substitute teacher has substituted to the best of his extemporaneous ability, he may complete the graciousness of his patch by going to the regular teacher, reporting the way he taught the class and the points he tried to bring out, telling what forward glance, if any, they have cast over the coming lesson, and especially giving the teacher a word of cheer for himself and a little compliment for him to pass on to the class. That bit of conversation will be the fastening of the thread which will keep the patch from ripping out, and accredit you as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

CHAPTER X

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE ATTENDANCE WANES

PERHAPS there never has been much of an attendance *to* wane. In that case, what I shall prescribe for a waning attendance will fit just as well. But more often it is necessary to propose remedies for a falling off in Sunday-school interest, both of teachers and scholars, with the resultant dropping down of attendance, while the blues and the dismals settle upon officers and classes. Fortunate indeed is the school that knows nothing of such times. What is to be done in those emergencies?

Well, in the first place, there may not be much reason for discouragement. **Know your field.** You may be filling it better than you think. Families may have moved away. The boys and girls may have gone off to school or to business elsewhere. Young married couples may be kept home by little children. The establishment of new churches and Sunday schools may have provided for part of your old constituency. Those who are not "present" may be "accounted for," and satisfactorily.

But if, on the other hand, your old scholars have left the school and are still in town, able to attend school but attending none, and if besides there are in town many children and adults whom your Sunday school ought to reach and does not, then there is cause for alarm, for prompt investigation, and for the adoption of thorough remedies.

Never Scold About the Attendance.—The people you will have a chance to scold are almost certainly not the people that are to blame. Even if they were, scolding does no good. There is a reason for the poor attendance. Discover it, frankly acknowledge it, and set to work manfully upon the cure of it.

This Reason May be Poor Teaching.—The teachers may not know enough about the Bible to make attendance worth while, or they may not tell what they know brightly enough to make the school attractive.

The sovereign remedy for this trouble is a teachers' meeting. You doubtless have tried it in your school; all schools do try it; but the leader was a poor one, or the good leader got tired or moved away, and the teachers' meeting died or is dying. Resurrect it. You can. Obtain the best available leader. Contrary to the common impression, executive ability is more necessary here than teaching ability. Your best leader for a teachers' meeting is some one that can set others to work, and draw out the thoughts and plans of all for the benefit of all. Introduce outside aid in the way of occasional lectures before the teachers by specialists. Assign definite parts in the teachers' meeting to as many teachers as possible. Never spend more than half the time of the meeting upon the thing to be taught, and devote the rest of the time to discussing the best ways of teaching it. A good teachers' meeting is feasible everywhere, and a good teachers' meeting means full classes almost every time.

The cause of the poor attendance may be a dull-looking school-room, that gives every one that enters it the blue

shivers. The remedy, of course, is to brighten up the room. Paint is cheap, wall paper is cheaper, pictures are cheaper still, and flowers are cheapest of all.

Perhaps your opening exercises are listless, monotonous, drawling, and stupid. That cannot help affecting the attendance unfavorably, because its depressing influence extends over the whole Sunday-school hour. The obvious remedy is to put variety and sparkle into this beginning of the school, with special music, an orchestra, an occasional recitation, much singing, Bible-readings diversified continually, a picture shown now and then, or some object from Bible lands. Plan the opening. Plan different openings. Let the openings move swiftly, with no harangues, but with much for all to do. This change alone will add to the interest of the school more than you imagine.

Perhaps your attendance is waning because the scholars themselves are not interested in filling the school and keeping it full. "The best advertisement," any business man will tell you, "is personal mention." If Mrs. Satterlee and Mrs. Sapperton and Mrs. Schermerhorn will tell their next-door neighbors how very cheap and good are Wilkins & Wallace's towels, that enterprising firm may safely dispense with expensive newspaper announcements. There is no better way to promote the growth of your Sunday school than to set Charlie Faunce and Flossy Colgrove to telling Tom Lemons and Susie Baldwin what perfectly splendid times they have there.

There are several good ways of interesting the scholars in the work of bringing in new members. One method is to divide the scholars into companies of five,

each five being made up from one class so far as possible; then let the fives see how soon they can increase themselves to tens, by adding new scholars to their own class or any other. Announce the fact from Sunday to Sunday as each ten is completed.

Another method is to start a contest, seeing which class, in proportion to its initial numbers, can, within a given time, increase its size the most. Prizes may add to the interest of the contest, if it is thought wise, and some schools are in the habit of presenting a reward to each scholar who brings another to the school, the reward being given after the new scholar has attended a certain number of weeks.

The young people's society may be enlisted in this work. Most of these societies have Sunday-school committees, formed for the express purpose of aiding the school in every way; and of course the promotion of good attendance is one of their chief aims. In many localities the young people's societies have carried on a systematic, house-to-house canvass of the town for new scholars; and if they do not do it, the school officers could easily organize such a canvass on their own account. Where the young people do this work, some of the older members of the school should be deputed to oversee it, that their experienced wisdom may guide the young folks' energy and zeal.

A permanent plan for recruiting should be part of the machinery of the school. I know of nothing better than to appoint in each class a membership committee, with a chairman, who makes weekly reports to the class. It would be best to have the class itself elect this committee

once a year. "Does any scholar know of any one who should be a member of this class?" This question should be asked every Sunday by every teacher. It is a great mistake to throw upon the teacher the responsibility for maintaining the attendance and increasing it. Talk about the interest and value of the class will come with far more grace from the scholars than from the teacher, and will be far more effective.

A similar committee may be appointed, once a year or once a quarter, from the entire school. It might be called a "scout committee," or an "invitation committee," and its duty should be to watch the Sunday congregations and invite all the strangers to come to the school; offering to accompany them, if the school is held after the morning service.

The Pulpit Announcement.—The work of such a committee will be strongly aided by a hearty, attractive announcement of the Sunday school from the pulpit,—not one of these perfunctory notices: "Sunday school at the conclusion of this service, and all are cordially invited to attend," but a few sentences into which some original emotion is evidently put, such as this announcement: "You don't know what you are missing if you are not attending our Sunday school. Last Sunday, for instance, I dropped into Professor Thomas's class, and I heard the most illuminating discussion of the parable of the talents I have ever listened to. Just step into the vestry at the end of this service, and try it for an hour."

There are many other methods by which the pastor may promote Sunday-school attendance. One of the best of these is by taking the Sunday-school topic now

and then for the theme of his sermon—not the whole lesson, so that he will exhaust it, but one small corner of it, with references to the larger subject which is to be treated fully in the Sunday-school classes. It is often very helpful also to hold a series of prayer meetings, whose topics are those of the following Sunday-school lessons.

Home Department Help.—A first-class ally of the school in this matter of attendance is the home department. No Sunday school should try to get along without such a department, and this is only one of its advantages. A well organized home department, with its score or more of zealous visitors, watching for every opportunity to transform the home student into the regular attendant on the classes, will bring dozens of new scholars into the school every year, and bring them in under the best auguries for their permanent stay.

A Matter of Age.—A step quite necessary to take, if you would build up the membership of your school, is to consider what ages are not well represented there, and so plan your campaign with special reference to the lacks you may discover. Is it adults you chiefly need? Are you weak in the matter of young married people? Is there a falling off among the boys when they get to their middle teens? One of these deficiencies is quite sure to be discovered; very likely all of them, with others.

The best remedy is to set to work those of the particular age or ages whom you already have in the school. Get the boys to bring in the boys, the young couples to seek out other young couples, set the primary depart-

ment and the adult department to enlarging themselves. There is no leader for a boy of twelve quite equal to another boy of twelve:

Social Classes.—After you have studied into the matter of ages, continue the process a little and see what social classes are represented in your school and what are not. How about the servant girls? Are the business men there, the merchants and their clerks? Are the students conspicuous by their absence? Yours is a railroad town; what is your Sunday school doing for the railroad men?

For many of these, perhaps for all of them, your only chance of interesting them in the school is by the establishing of special classes, led by teachers peculiarly adapted to the constituency you are seeking to reach. A wide-awake Christian manufacturer may be persuaded to organize in the school a class for business men, young and old. Some college professor may gather around him the young collegians and the school teachers. Some wise and loving woman may draw together a class of servant girls.

The necessities of the case will sometimes require these special classes to be held at other times than the regular Sunday-school hour. Servant girls' classes, for example, are generally held in the afternoon. A railroad men's class must be held whenever the most of the men are at leisure. You must enlarge your idea of the Bible school until it becomes a sort of Bible university.

Many a Sunday school has been greatly enlarged and its interest magnificently quickened by a means that seems at first rather to rival the school than to aid it,—

an outside Bible-study class, taking up a course altogether independent of the International Lessons. If you can find an inspiring teacher to give such a course,—everything depends upon the teacher,—and if you can bring together in the class your teachers, the older scholars, and those of the congregation that should be in the Sunday school but are not, it will be an easy thing, after the course is completed, to divert to the school the fresh interest that will certainly be aroused. The result will be a large ingathering of new scholars.

A course of lectures on Biblical topics—again if the lecturer is an inspiring one—will prove almost as useful as the large Bible-study class in promoting zeal for the Sunday school. Useful, also, is any pleasant entertainment under Sunday-school auspices—a concert, a stereopticon lecture, a picnic, a novel form of sociable. Draw people together and set them to talking under the leadership of the school, and they will inevitably talk more or less about the school, and be drawn to it more or less.

Any special feature you can introduce into the school routine will serve as additional basis for that advertisement which is quite as necessary for the King's business as for secular commerce. Now it will be some unusually good music. Now it will be a set of bright chalk talks. Now it will be a newly installed stereopticon (for these instruments may be made quite as serviceable by daylight as by night, and the use of them adds wonderfully to the interest). Now it will be some object lesson introductory to the theme of the hour. Now it will be a series of five-minute drills on Bible geography or Bible

history, briskly conducted with maps and charts. Any plan of this sort, carried on with zest, will show enterprise, and demonstrate that the school is a live institution, worth the attendance of live people.

In country districts, and sometimes even in cities, a **Sunday-school omnibus** is quite essential if you would maintain attendance at the highest point. I say an omnibus, but of course I mean any roomy vehicle, which will gather up all, both old and young, who could not otherwise get to the school. The especial advantage of this is manifest, of course, on stormy days.

It is for these stormy days that we need to plan most carefully, since the habit of going to Sunday school is so easily broken; even a single lapse may break it. Strive in every way to impress upon the teachers the especial need of their presence on such days. Some preachers make it a point to preach their best sermons on rainy Sundays. In the same wise fashion, devise all the pleasant plans you can for stormy Sabbaths,—some jolly surprise, which the scholars that are there will talk about with their mates, and say: “Don’t you wish *you* hadn’t stayed at home for the rain?”

Though, as I have said, “the best advertisement is personal mention,” yet the Sunday school may well take a leaf from the tradesmen’s book, and make a liberal use of printer’s ink. Set at the task the most skilful writer in the school, some one with a genius for attractive ways of putting things, some one who knows also how to display his thoughts in a neat and taking arrangement of type. A few dollars every quarter spent for advertising circulars would be quite as well spent as for

missions ; indeed, it would mean many more dollars for missions in the end.

In addition, try **personally written postal cards** and letters of invitation. Systematize the work. Almost any member of the school will be willing to write one such letter a month. As you obtain the names of those that should be in the school, distribute them around, and make sure that each receives the stimulating written invitation. By the time a person gets the invitation in all these ways,—by word of mouth, by circular, by pulpit notice, and by letter,—he will begin to think seriously of accepting it, in self-defence !

Much depends upon **how the attendance is reported** to the school each Sunday. Individual attendance records will be kept, of course, by the secretary of each class, and full recognition should be given to individuals who are faithful as well as to classes. Once a quarter is none too often for the school secretary to read the names of all who have been present every Sabbath.

In making the weekly report, let the secretary study variety, and seek in every way to draw attention to his figures and their meaning. Sometimes—perhaps always—the record should be a graphic one. Place a large placard before the school at the end of the session, reading, in bold characters easily deciphered across the room : “ Attendance : last Sunday, —— ; this Sunday, ——.” Arrange it so that you can readily slip in the proper digits.

Often, however, the emphasis of the voice must be added. This may be merely by way of a cheery comment, such as : “ See how we are growing ! We’ll soon

have to move outdoors to get room enough!" or "Twenty more than last Sunday! That means that about twenty of you told your friends what a good time we have here, and got them to come with you." If the attendance is less than last Sunday, let the superintendent and secretary stand up and point to the placard, and simultaneously say just "Oh!" If you are seeking to develop some particular department, the secretary should give a vocal report concerning it every Sabbath, such as: "Our adult department is coming up; thirty-five this Sunday; that's a gain of ten in two weeks."

And now, after these suggestions for the increase of the attendance, I want to set off against them a needed warning. It is very easy to exalt Attendance upon the throne where the Bible alone should rest in your Sunday school, and that is a fatal error. To be sure, there is no use in wise teaching unless you have scholars to teach; but also, there is no use in having a room full of scholars unless you have wise teaching. Where the Bible is made vital in human lives, very slight effort will draw the crowds to it; where the fundamental purpose of the Sunday school is forgotten or relegated to the background, no amount of modern advertising will hold the crowds that the advertising will gather. "And I, if I be lifted up," still declares our Saviour, "will draw all men unto myself."

CHAPTER XI

THE BOY OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

DOUBTLESS for every girl whom a teacher is perplexed to win, there are a dozen boys. Therefore I will write about "the boy" rather than "the girl" in his out-of-school relations, though all that I shall say will be quite as applicable to the girl as to her brother.

I am convinced that the place to win the boy is outside the Sunday school. Most teachers seem to look upon their work as precisely analogous to fishing, the school-room being the pool to which the boy-trout resorts, and there alone they may cast their flies with any prospect of success. Teaching is more like hunting. You must go forth adventurously and range the woodland. You must seek your game in their native lairs. Their haunts are many, and wide apart. You cannot sit still and bid them come to you; and if you corral them and shoot at them *en masse*, that is sheer butchery!

A teacher's work is well-nigh a failure, then, if it is confined to the paltry hour of the Sunday school. You must win the boy on ground that is natural to him. But what ground *is* natural to him? To give a few practical suggestions in answer to that question is the purpose of this chapter.

Boys' Clubs.—It has become quite the fashion to advise the organization of boys' clubs, if religious workers wish to get hold of those tricky spirits. Now there is

no doubt that boys love a club, though I fear they enjoy the most preposterous club of their own contrivance far more than the finest arrangement craftily impressed upon them from the outside, though it be psychologically perfect in all its details, and modeled upon the ideas of the professor of pedagogy who has written the latest book. But really, with public-school teachers and Sunday-school teachers and pastors and Christian Endeavor workers and parents and friends and philosophical investigators of "the boy problem" all forming boy clubs, Johnny is in a fair way to be clubbed to death. Do *not* form a boys' club, therefore, in connection with your class, if that side of the boy-nature is already satisfied with such an organization. Try some other plan.

Various Kinds of Clubs.—However, if the way is clear, a boys' club is certainly a good method. What sort of club? Boys are interested in many things, they are blessedly ready to be interested in nearly everything; therefore you have chiefly to ask what you know most about, like best, and can best do.

Are you a walking enthusiast? Then a walking club,—"The Peripatetics," perhaps,—with Saturday tramps to this and that object of local interest, with tests of speed and endurance, and with a fine infusion of John Burroughs and Bradford Torrey, will be the organization you are most likely to make succeed.

Are you learned in history? Then an indoor coterie, "The Explorers," will find the fascination of MacMaster and Macaulay, of Motley and Green. Whatever traces of the past are found in your neighborhood, also, will draw your club into the open.

Is chess your hobby? Then establish a "Pillsbury Partnership," inaugurate a furore of gambits and problems, and hold a tournament every fortnight. And it might as well be checkers, or tennis, or crokinole.

If you can mount the class on bicycles, organize yourselves into "The Hotspurs," with meets, and century runs, and club colors, and mysterious bugle calls, and a range over the entire county.

What delightful possibilities for you and the boys lie ensconced in a natural history club, the "Eye-Eyes" ("Indefatigable Investigators")! And that, whether you take for your province snails or stars, birds or butterflies, fossils or flowers! A museum. Scientific "papers." Exhibition days. Long rambles over hill and dale.

A travel club (R. R.—the Royal Rangers!) will minister to the boys' love of adventure. Rightly chosen books, together with a selection of the photographs of foreign scenes now so plentiful, excellent, and inexpensive, joined with essays and readings, and talks from the many—and nowadays they *are* many, at every crossroads—who have actually "been there,"—is not that a promising prospectus?

Then, there are possibilities of an art club (with the aid of photographs and half-tone prints), a puzzle club ("The Brain-Twisters"), a scrap-book club ("The Clippers"),—indeed, you can attach the club idea to any of your interests, with fair prospects of making it an absorbing interest with the boys.

Club Mysteries.—One of the chief advantages of the club is its opportunity for the mysteriousness in which boys greatly delight. You can give it an odd name,

known to the uninitiated only by cabalistic letters. You can have a badge or a button, a system of pass-words and hidden tokens, and even a secret language, made incomprehensible by such easy devices as the addition of "ibus" "ery" and "atic" to every word, and the substitution of "hat" for "and," and "cob" for "the."

But if the club is overworked in your neighborhood, you can use the same ideas in other forms. It is not necessary to form a Philately Phellowship in order to utilize in your boy-winning those alluring bits of gummed paper. You can simply constitute your sitting-room a stamp exchange, and gather the boys there occasionally with their albums. You need not establish an athletic club in order to conduct a "field day," in which the boys of your class, acting as marshals, will set up the lists in running, leaping, vaulting, throwing, wrestling, with all the boys in town. An evening of puzzles at your house may be better than a puzzle club, and an hour or two with your microscope may answer in lieu of the "Eye-Eyes."

I am not urging the teacher to press into all their boy lives, obtruding himself upon every sport and making himself the monitor of every interest. I am only insisting that he should enter enough of their lives to know them thoroughly, and get into vital touch with them. That being accomplished, in whatever fashion, his work with the boy outside the school is done.

"How Shall I Begin?" is the question sure to be asked by those who enjoy none of this contact with their scholars.

Begin gradually. The boy is a shy animal, not to be

caught by a sudden leap. Perhaps an evening at your house is the best way, with good things to eat (the boy demonstrates the Chinese notion that the seat of the affections is the stomach!) and with the merriest of games. This may grow into a regular series of class socials, held once a month, sometimes at the home of the teacher, sometimes at the homes of the scholars. Later, the class may even venture upon corporate hospitality, and invite some other class to an evening's fun.

A series of class excursions is another mode of approach to boys that has proved its value. Take them to the menagerie, having previously armed yourself with a budget of animal anecdotes. Visit the art gallery with them, the museum, and the public library. Take them to the court house and the city hall. Be their chaperon at some interesting session of the legislature, the city council, the board of aldermen, or the school committee. Keep on the lookout for bright lectures to which you may escort them. Go with them to a college, and show them its ways of working. Pilot them through a fire-engine house, a police station, a glass factory, a tannery, a flour mill. In the summer, conduct a grand outing, and "tent it" with them for a week. Not all of these charming excursions will be open to you, but many of them will, and you can easily devise substitutes for those you must omit. It is impossible to measure the good you may accomplish through these excursions with your class. They will be worth, in character-building and for eternity, all the money and time they will cost, and a thousand times more.

Little Attentions.—But along with these more elaborate

plans, there are many little attentions you can show the boys that will count, often, for as much as the extensive schemes. A jolly word when you pass them on the street. Friendly letters written to them when you, or they, are out of town. Kindly messages and visits and little presents when they are sick. An invitation, now to this boy and now to that, to take a meal at your house, spend the evening, or pass the night. A little care in guiding their reading, with the recommendation of "splendid" books in the public library or the loan of equally "splendid" books from your own collection. One evening in the week regularly set apart as theirs, an evening in which you are "at home" to them and to them alone. One room in your house dedicated as class headquarters, and used for that purpose only and fully. A circular letter, to be passed from one to another, in a prescribed order. A cumulative letter, to be passed in like manner, but each member of the class to add a brief note as it comes to him. A class paper (if any scholar has a printing press or a duplicating contrivance) with its proper corps of editors and its important list of subscribers. All of these ways of winning the boys are feasible for some teachers, and some of them are feasible for all teachers.

There is no need of emphasizing the necessity of seeing them often **in their own homes**, knowing their parents, their surroundings, their helps and hindrances in this place where helps and hindrances are most powerful. This duty is quite generally recognized. Would that it were heeded as generally.

In all of this familiar intercourse with the boys, where

does religion come in? It comes in everywhere, underneath, though it may come in nowhere on the surface. It is impossible to enter into any pleasant, helpful relation with your scholars out of school that will not strengthen your influence in school, confirm your teaching and inspire their studying.

The essentials are, first, to know the boy. You cannot teach any one until you know him. Second, to love the boy. You cannot know any one until you love him. Third, to get the boy to know you and love you, without which also he cannot be taught by you. Don't pretend. Don't "let yourself down" to them. Don't think that you must act like a boy in order to win a boy. Be sincere and manly and downright. Be jolly and sympathetic and alert. In becoming their comrade never cease to become their leader.

And in it all, estimate very lightly what you are doing for them compared with what they are doing for you.

CHAPTER XII

THOSE NOTICES

THE giving of notices is a Sunday-school necessity. Some schools minimize the notices, others revel in them, but all must endure them.

The Value of Notices.—And they are by no means an unmixed evil. Rightly managed, they may quicken attention and agreeably diversify the exercises. They introduce the scholars to new and helpful interests. They serve as a sort of table of contents of Christian work.

They *may* be all this, but they seldom are. Usually, they are hindrances and nuisances. Usually, the hackneyed introduction, "Listen to the following notices," is a signal for confusion or apathy. The superintendent stumbles over unfamiliar chirography. He drones and mumbles. He rambles through long and unessential particulars. He repeats, and repeats, and repeats. He faithfully rehearses whatever stupidity is handed him. Thus, for instance:—

"The twenty-first annual convention of the Sunday-school Association of Caldwell County will meet at Urbana on Thursday, December 6. Interesting addresses are expected from the Rev. Dr. Augustus B. Brownlow and Prof. James L. Guinness. A full attendance is desired. All are urgently invited to be present. Per order committee, John Smith, chairman."

Great good will that do!

Brisk Notices.—How much more likely would the teachers be to attend that convention if the superintendent should say :—

“I have made up my mind to go to Urbana next Thursday. I really can't afford to miss our county Sunday-school convention. Dr. Brownlow is to speak,—the most helpful Bible student within a hundred miles,—and Professor Guinness,—the man who carries on that splendid class of working men over in Shelbyville, you know. I hope that many of our teachers will be able to share this treat.”

Maybe it is a teachers' meeting :—

“I desire to give notice that the regular teachers' meeting will be held this week on Tuesday evening at the usual time, 7.30 P. M. It will be held at the usual place, in the parsonage. A very full attendance is desired, as the meeting is to be addressed by Mrs. Randall, who will discuss the geography of Palestine. Don't forget, the parsonage, and 7.30 P. M., sharp. I hope all the teachers will be present. Let every one come. The attendance at our teachers' meetings has fallen off lately. Now I hope that every teacher in this school will be at the parsonage next Tuesday evening, at 7.30 sharp. It is very desirable to have a full attendance. Very. The parsonage, 7.30, Tuesday evening, remember. Let all come.”

That is a very naked hook, and it would be a hungry fish that would bite. Why such insistence on the familiar details, the “usual” time and place, and the desirability of attendance? Never mind the desir-

ability; what is needed is to arouse desire. Thus, perhaps:—

“You all know that Mrs. Randall has just got back from the Holy Land. I was at her house the other evening, and she showed me a lot of interesting things, and told me a lot of interesting facts. She can make one almost believe he has been to Jerusalem himself, and Bethlehem and Nazareth, and all the precious places. Now she is going to speak at the teachers’ meeting on Tuesday evening, and I don’t believe the parsonage will begin to hold all that want to hear her. The teachers would better go early.”

From these illustrations several points will be evident:—

Notices should not be read, but given in the superintendent’s own words, in a brisk, conversational style. The more of himself the superintendent puts into the notice, the more of his hearers is he likely to grip.

At the same time, for the sake of accuracy, the superintendent should have the notice before him in writing; and if he is to give several notices, they should be pinned or pasted together, to avoid confusion and quicken the operation.

The tedious insistence on non-essentials is the great flaw in most giving of notices. Pick out what is important to be known, and let the rest go.

On the other hand, a notice must be full enough to leave an impression of facts, and not flash like a meteor’s path, that instantly melts into the sky.

The value of a notice is quite doubled if you can say “I” all through it. **Personality counts.** If you have

heard the lecturer whose course you are announcing, and like him, say so. If you are going to a meeting you are advertising and anticipate pleasure, put that in. And if you cannot incorporate your own personality, perhaps you can attach to the notice the personality of some one else.

A bit of fun is invaluable, if you would have the notice remembered; only, join the joke so closely to the announcement that the two are inseparable, or the comicality will be certain to fly away with your hearers' attention, and leave far out of sight the facts to be remembered.

In fine, the notices require preparation, often as careful preparation as any other feature of the Sunday-school hour. Usually, important interests depend upon them for their success, and it is a shameful neglect of "our Father's business" to present them in a slovenly and ineffective manner. Here, as everywhere else, profit springs from preparation.

I would even go so far as to write out different ways of making important notices and study them, so as to select the most attractive phrases. Of course, this is only for practice, and not with any view to reading a written notice before the school.

Much depends upon the voice you use. Let it be loud, but not harsh; decisive, but not jerky; pleasant, but not undignified.

Much depends on the time you select. Do not choose a moment of restlessness and confusion, or a time when the school is attending to something else,—finding a hymn, perhaps, or making an offering. If the notices

are worth giving at all, they are worth a whole hearing and not a divided one.

The best time for the notices is early in the session, perhaps following the prayer. Some particulars of leading moment, however, may need to be repeated at the close of the hour, in order to clinch them upon the memory.

Some notices may best be given upon the blackboard, without a spoken word. If you try the plan, make sure that every letter is easily read from the remotest corner of the room. A unique effect may be gained from a brightly worded announcement, prettily printed with colored chalk, put in place by the superintendent, and pointed to in absolute silence.

A little drawing adds much to such advertisements, and even very indifferent talents shine under the generous indistinctness of crayon. For example, if you want to announce a Christmas concert, draw a Christmas tree and color it green, with yellow-flashing candles and bright red bundles. If it is a harvest festival you are proclaiming, depict an ear of golden corn. If it is an Easter exercise, draw an egg.

Large sheets of paper, even the cheap manila wrapping-paper, make excellent substitutes for the blackboard, if you lack that most useful and easily obtained Sunday-school aid. A bulletin board at the entrance may give out most of your notices for you, or at least impress them more deeply on the mind. Little slips of paper, on which the notice has been printed by one of the many inexpensive manifolding devices, may be placed in the hands of every one; and if the trouble is warranted,

no better mode of Sunday-school advertising could be devised.

The Extra Notices.—All that has been said applies, also, of course, to the many recurring notifications that can scarcely be called notices in any formal sense.

For instance, the school has sent a gift to some missionary, and a letter of thanks has been received. How tiresome to read the letter *in toto*, from the date line at the beginning, through all the pleasant but often inconsequential particulars, to the signature at the close! Let the superintendent fix in his mind the brightest points of the letter, and *talk* it off:—

“ You remember that ten dollars we sent Mr. Saunders, out in Idaho? He has written me a letter, and you can't guess how much good that money has done. Why, it has bought the baby some new socks, and Jimmy Saunders a new pair of mittens, and mended a hole in the roof, and—” so you go on, while every mind is attentive. If you had *read* that letter, however brightly Mr. Saunders might have written it, you could not have produced an equal effect.

There are also such announcements as the number present and the amount of the collection. These facts may be so stated as to increase both the attendance and the offering, or they may be put before the school in a way so dull and careless as to render the scholars themselves stupid and indifferent.

Sometimes the secretary and treasurer make these announcements; and this is a good plan, if they can be depended upon to speak at the right instant, briskly and loudly. Indeed, the superintendent will always do well

to get some one else to make an announcement for him, provided the substitute has some personal interest in what he is going to say, and can speak precisely to the point.

And finally, I hope none of my readers will think I have spent too many words upon a small matter. No constantly recurring Sunday-school feature is a small matter. Only a few minutes are given to the notices, to be sure; but multiply them by tens of thousands of schools and millions upon millions of listening scholars, and the total of precious time and possible influence would surely warrant many a chapter longer than this. It is the littles that make success, in the Sunday school and everywhere else.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SWING OF THE SCHOOL

YOU notice the difference as soon as you enter.

One school is alert, the other loggy ; one is attentive, the other heedless ; one is interested, the other bored. The first school seems to run itself ; the second, to be painfully hauled. The first school marches—tramp, tramp, tramp, the irresistible swing of the regiment. The second school hobbles and crawls.

This is a fundamental difference in schools. There are other fundamental reasons why some schools are comparative failures ; but if they have not this regimental swing, that is certainly one reason.

The Officers.—This swing implies, in the first place, good officers. When you see a body of men or boys marching with this glorious alacrity, unison, and poise, you will know that he of the shoulder straps or the chevrons is back of it. That march is his zeal incorporated, his enthusiasm and skill and patience. And likewise when you see a Sunday school that goes with a swing you will be sure that its officers are no dawdling incompetents, but that they are business men, about the King's business.

The Drill.—The Sunday-school swing implies, in the second place, long and persistent drill, just as in the case of the regiment. A certain measure of routine is essential if a school is to run smoothly. Endless changes,

incessant variety, may keep the scholars expectant, but it also keeps them uncertain and hesitant. Familiar roads are smooth; and if they are well made, they are free from ruts.

The Band.—Much of the regimental swing is due, in the third place, to the regimental band. Its inspiring strains quicken every foot, with every heart. They bind the regiment firmly together by the invisible cable of sound, so that the thousand move as a single man. And what the band is to the regiment, that the enthusiasm of the superintendent is to the Sunday school. His smiles are reflected in the smiles of a hundred faces. His words of cheer, his jolly laugh, his calm trust and confidence, multiply themselves wherever he moves among the classes. It is a glorious privilege, thus to set the time for the march of the whole school.

All Together.—But no one man makes the regimental swing, not even the colonel, lead he never so magnificently. No band makes it, play it never so briskly. The regimental swing requires the co-operation of the men of the regiment, practically of them all. And so in the Sunday school: it is not enough for the superintendent to be enthusiastic or the teachers to be well trained; the school will not swing till the scholars also have caught the step and are alive with the rhythm.

The swing of the school begins with the opening word of the superintendent, or even with his decisive stepping upon the platform. That appearance before the school should be the sole signal for quiet and attention, recognized and obeyed as a thousand clanging call bells never would be.

The Start.—If a company of soldiers starts to march in a straggling, listless way, they will straggle listlessly to their journey's end. How often, when I was drilling at school, did the sergeant stop the company with a sharp "Halt!" if we did not start off with left feet simultaneously brisk! And, alas! for the multitude of schools that are started Sunday after Sunday in the same old, listless way—the same songs sung in the same fashion at the same intervals; the same reading of Scripture, verse about; the same prayer, with its stock phrases about "choose out our changes" and "each and every one of us," and "all this with the forgiveness of our sins"; the same conclusion, "The classes will now study the lesson."

The superintendent should prepare for the start-off as thoroughly as the teachers prepare for the lesson. He should devise little surprises, a new order, fresh methods for the old order. The opening exercises give the time for the whole session. Do not let them drag.

The Programme.—Beginning thus, the swing of the school will depend on a swift programme, well thought out beforehand, and carried through with no pauses or delays. If one feature fails or is tardy, pass promptly to the next, returning to it, if you choose and it is ready. It would be comical, if it were not so sad, to see how quickly a school goes to pieces while the superintendent is having a whispered consultation with one of his officers, or the secretary, who was to read a notice, is fumbling for it through his pockets. Allow no opportunity for this catastrophe. Keep things moving.

The Close.—Then, if this swinging opening is to be brought to the climax of a swinging close that will carry

the effect of the Sunday school throughout the coming week, the school must not be allowed to break step in the teaching half hour. The superintendent, as was his duty, has delivered the scholars to the teachers with minds eager and receptive. It is their duty to deliver the scholars back to him still unfagged and alert. Impress this responsibility upon them, and show them how to do it. In other words, have a weekly teachers' meeting!

There are many superintendents that will not know what I am talking about in this article, and never will know until chance, or a blessed providence, or the wise arrangement for visiting made by some Sunday-school association, brings them into a school that does move with a swing. I worked for years in a school without a swing, and knew no better till I was led, one happy day, into a school of the opposite kind. It was, indeed, an enlightenment.

And after a man has had this experience he is never again satisfied with Sunday-school flabbiness. He has seen that the Sunday-school swing means officers cheered by a sense of progress, teachers in their places with their hearts on their duty, enthusiasm everywhere, and brightness and determination. Best of all, he perceives that the school swing is infectious; that it draws in with it, in spite of themselves, the listless, the mischievous, and the stupid, and incorporates them with the onrush of the regiment. Were it only to sweep such as these into the kingdom of heaven, the Sunday-school swing would be infinitely worth while.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PEDAGOGIC VALUE OF FUN

THERE is a capital story by Owen Wister called "Philosophy Four." It represents two hearty students of Harvard, who are afflicted with Course Four in the uncongenial study of philosophy, and are doing some very necessary but very doleful cramming under a pedantic tutor in preparation for the ordeal of final examinations. Maddened beyond control by the delights of a perfect June morning, they boldly escape from their tutor into a far-away meadow, where they convert philosophy into a jovial sport, pelting each other with inquiries concerning Pythagoras and the rest, and keeping score against each other as if the game were football or tennis. In the examination next day they outrank their disgusted tutor—a conclusion entirely natural, and much applauded by the reader.

Pleasure and Profit.—What was true of Philosophy Four is true of all studies whatever, and assuredly true of our Sunday-school work, namely, that "No profit goes where there's no pleasure ta'en," and that, *per contra*, the nearer a study can approach to a game, the better results will be won, in the memory and the life.

I do not advocate buffoonery, of course, the telling of jokes malapropos, the meaningless grin, the nervous titter, the sacrifice of worth to wit and of profit to a pun. A monkey in a school-room would doubtless win

and hold the attention of the children, but he would see the outside of the door even more promptly than Mary's little lamb.

Still less do I suggest the use of sarcasm, that teachers should "make fun" of the mistakes of their scholars. Fun means sympathy, entering into the feeling of the class and into the spirit of your task. There is no fun that is not fun for two.

The advantages of fun in teaching the Sunday-school lesson are many. It clarifies the head. A good laugh is a tonic to the brain as well as to the blood. Note how the eyes of the children brighten when they are amused. Their minds brighten at the same time, back of their eyes.

That is one reason why the stories told by a witty speaker are sure to be remembered, even though his earnest remarks are forgotten, and that is why so many are afraid of introducing humor into serious discussions. This difficulty, however, arises only from the habit of throwing in comicalities merely to raise a laugh, bits of humor that are practically unconnected with the subject, like clusters of electric lights placed in front of a picture. But there is no such difficulty if the fun is introduced like electric lights half covered in the ceiling, a reflector throwing all their light on the picture below. Attach your merriment to the points of the lesson so that the two are inseparably joined together in your scholars' minds, and whatever brightness you bring into the lesson will simply insure its retention in the memory.

Another reason for the use of fun in teaching the lesson is that thus you check your scholars' tendency to

mischief. A good laugh is a safety-valve for energy that might otherwise work itself off in disorder. These lively pieces of humanity are determined to have a good time somehow. See that they have it, but in your way.

Our Happy Religion.—The best reason for the introduction of fun into your teaching is that thus you show the happy side of religion; you make it evident that Christianity is not a compound of long faces, sighs, and darkened rooms, but that it is cheery, sunshiny, hearty, even jovial.

Once in Canada I came across a summer colony of a peculiar sect, an article in whose creed was the right to laugh right out in meeting. I attended some of their religious gatherings, and was startled, and interested if not edified, by the frank, unafraid, unmistakable laughter with which, all over the auditorium, the brethren and sisters manifested their pleasure in the utterances of their minister.

Well, I would not advocate that custom, but still I should decidedly prefer it to the religious whine and the pious groan. It appears more uncouth only because it is less common. Ah, Sunday-school workers, we are engaged in the propagation of earth's supreme happiness, the one source of all joy there is. As a commercial traveler carries samples of his goods, as a barber must look neat about the head and a tailor about the body, so let us, whose business it is to advocate the kingdom of heaven, exhibit in our lives the essence of that kingdom—not only righteousness and peace, but also joy in the Holy Ghost!

A Merry Bearing.—To gain this desirable element for

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your teaching, it is not essential that you have a sharp tongue, ready with quip and crank. A merry bearing, without a spoken word, will greatly commend you to the hearts of the young folks. Marvelous is the effect of a cheerful face, a dancing eye, a brisk and alert carriage. Go with these to the class, and you have well-nigh succeeded before you begin.

Brisk Speech.—Add to this a sprightly way of talking. A droning teacher would better lay aside his commission till he can reform his voice. Questions that hesitate will never elicit prompt replies. Explanations that limp and exhortations that stumble will never lead these direct young minds into the kingdom of heaven. I think that most Sunday-school teachers talk too slowly. When men are eager, when they are “dead in earnest,” their words crowd on one another’s heels, and flash with the fiery torches of conviction. There is no deliberate, stately utterance when children are at play, or when grown-ups are really enjoying themselves.

Be Your Scholars’ Chum.—Another fatal defect of manner is that indefinable primness, quality of the traditional schoolma’am, which at once puts a thousand leagues between you and your scholars. Most desirable is that easy *comraderie* with which all successful teachers approach their classes—a fascinating friendliness with which some are naturally gifted, but which others must strive after with long desire. The prim teacher will say, “You are mistaken, Lucy. Can you not give the correct reply?” And Lucy will blush and dumbly shake her head. The teacher who is “just too lovely for anything” will say, “O come now, Lucy, I know you

don't mean that! Just think a minute, dear." And Lucy will grin and give the right answer, if it is in her curly pate.

Of course, this *comraderie* cannot be merely feigned. It must be the real thing, or not at all. The teacher must actually be on easy terms with her scholars, or she cannot talk easily with them. And how shall one get on easy terms with one's class? It cannot be done without spending time and taking trouble. The teacher must have good times with the class outside the Sunday school. Arrange occasional expeditions with them, to some museum, or library, or public institution, or scene of historical interest. Take walks with them now and then, to study the birds, or the flowers, or the rocks. Hold a field day, for outdoor games and athletic contests. Invite them to your home for an evening of games. Now and then get them to meet at your house to study next Sunday's lesson with you, following the study with games, singing, and a round of apples and nuts. Invite other classes, that will be congenial, to join your class sometimes in these pleasant hours.

Enjoying it Yourself.—And how, it may be asked, if you do not take kindly to games, if you do not enjoy them and are awkward at them? What if fun does not "come natural" to you?

Well, in that case about the first thing you need to do is to make fun natural to you! Change your nature. Gloom is not goodness—it is almost its opposite. It is a serious handicap to be too serious; it is likely to lessen your influence over others. Men that are most saintly and most deeply in earnest—like Phillips Brooks,

for instance, or Moody, or Spurgeon—are men that know best how to laugh and how to make others laugh. If you would strive as earnestly to learn to play as you strive to succeed in your work, you *would* learn to play, and your work would be immensely benefited by the operation. Certainly you cannot get your class to enjoy their work until you also enjoy it, until you put into it the vivacity and zest of recreation.

Something of the spirit of a game should enter all recitations. Those two young men of “Philosophy Four” were all the better friends because of their friendly contest out in the meadows, and they became friends, moreover, with the subject. I like to divide classes, half against half, and keep competitive score of their answers to my questions. I like to set one scholar after another before a class, and see who can stand the longest fire of interrogatories. I like to write divisions of the subject upon slips of paper and have the class draw them by lot, each elucidating the topic he draws. I like to make an outline map upon the blackboard and then cover it while the scholars copy it from memory, fastening a gilt paper star upon the best copy. In many other ways it is possible to introduce into the recitation the spirit of a game, the spirit of friendly and fascinating contest.

Plan the Fun.—This enlivening of the lesson must be planned for as carefully as any other feature of the teacher’s work; it will not come without planning. Especially if the theme is heavy and difficult is such enlivening necessary for the best results. It will not destroy good impressions; it will do the opposite, it will

clinch them. I would introduce into every lesson plan one section that I would call "Just for Fun." It would really be more than that, but never mind.

Perhaps it would be merely the telling of a bright and pointed story. A good illustration, with a whiff of fun in it, will brighten a lesson wonderfully. To gather these I have a plan which I commend to all Sunday-school workers. I keep a large number of envelopes, each marked with the name of some virtue, vice, or other commonly recurring category, and all arranged in alphabetical order. Into these goes a large and constantly growing collection of anecdotes and other material for illustrations. When I read a good story, suitable for use in brightening a Sunday-school lesson, I cut it out and put it in the appropriate envelope. When I hear a good illustration I jot down the points, and file my notes in the same way. Thus I have at my instant command a well-filled storehouse of material for enlivening my lessons.

Specimen Illustrations.—For example, we are to discuss next Sunday Paul's testimony that he had learned, in whatsoever state, to be therein content. I find in my envelope marked "Contentment" some notes of a bit of observation made by a friend of mine, and I tell the class next Sunday how she was walking out one day when she passed the house of a poor old woman and saw her sitting on her front porch. Now this woman's husband, John by name, was a ne'er-do-well and a drunkard, who abused the old woman shamefully; and yet she was sitting there, her face radiant with smiles.

"Why, Aunt Marthy," said my friend, "you must have had good news, you look so happy."

"No," said the dear old lady, "but I was just thinking if my John was good and kind, how nice it would be!"

Or perhaps the lesson is on prayer, and includes Christ's saying that whatever we ask for we are to believe that we have it, and we—have it. Straightway in my envelope marked "Faith" I find the story of a very poor family of a town in which I once lived. There was nothing to eat in the house, but the mother had gone out to beg some bread and milk for her children. In eager and confident expectation the children sat in a row before the fire, each with an empty bowl and a spoon.

Suddenly the oldest noticed that the youngest had his bowl tipped very much to one side.

"Sammy!" she exclaimed, "see what you're doin'! You're spillin' your milk—when you git it!"

Your Own Discoveries.—Such illustrations as these two are, for me, vastly better than perhaps more striking illustrations that I have merely picked up from books, because the two little events happened in my own town. In like manner, the anecdotes I discover for myself, in books, periodicals, or the sermons I hear, are better for my use than the admirable illustrations I find in the lesson helps, though I use them also. The more intimately the illustrations are associated with your own life, the more valuable will they be in your teaching.

If that is true, then certainly the most useful illustration of all is one associated with the lives of your scholars. If you have become one of their number, if you are admitted to their little jokes and are acquainted with the

incidents of their lives that mean the most to them, then you will miss a great opportunity if you do not utilize such knowledge in teaching the lesson. For example, you are talking about Saul's rapid progress in evil as soon as he allowed the spirit of jealousy to creep into his heart, and you slyly remark, "Saul found his downward course accelerated after the first wrong step, just as Tom the other day kept rolling faster and faster when he slipped on Pigeon Hill!" Tom, certainly, and probably all the rest of the class, will never forget that point.

Use Your Imagination.—Perhaps the best mode of enlivening the lesson is by a vigorous use of a consecrated imagination applied to the Scripture you are studying. I was always impressed by this in the preaching of D. L. Moody. The great evangelist was never more happy than when engaged in the exposition of some event of the Bible. It was so real to him that he made it real to the audience. His hearers became spectators, as the actual scene was spread before their eyes.

For instance, I shall never forget his rendering—that is the proper word—of the story of Elisha and the widow with her oil. Moody sent her and her boy around among the neighbors after oil jars, in which to store the expected miraculous supply.

"Rat-tat-tat!"

"Who's there?"

"It's the Widow Benjamin. Have you any empty jars I could borrow?"

"Why, yes, one—and maybe two. Come right in, neighbor. And let my Isaac help you carry them home."

The other folks in the street begin to look out of the windows.

“Why, what *is* the Widow Benjamin up to? She and her boy Joseph have taken home ten jars already, by actual count, and if she isn’t going out after more this very minute!”

“Rat-tat-tat!”

And thus the vivid description proceeded. Is there any doubt that every one in the room carried away an undying impression of at least that one Bible story, and of the lesson of faith and works which Mr. Moody drew appropriately from it?

The Story of the Demoniac.—Mr. Moody’s delight and model, Christmas Evans, the famous Welsh preacher, had the same sprightly imagination. So rememberable were his sermons that, though he left no writings, they have been transmitted to us minutely and faithfully from the memories upon which he stamped them.

A good example is his sermon on the demoniac and the swine. We are made to see the swine heading for the cliff, and one of the swineherds, more alert than the rest, cries out:

“What ails the hogs? Look sharp there, boys—keep them in—use your whips! Why don’t you run? Why, I declare, one of them has gone over the cliff! There, there goes another! Drive them back, Tom!”

But over they all go, “*black hog and all!*”

So the story proceeds, with an animated conversation between the swineherds and the owner of the herd. Then the scene changes. The demoniac, clothed and in his right mind, is returning home. He shouts the good

news to every one he meets. His children see him in the distance. They run to tell their mother. The frightened family lock the doors against him.

“Are all the windows fastened, children?”

“Yes, mother.”

“Mary, my dear, come from the window—don’t be standing there.”

“Why, mother, I can hardly believe it is father! That man is well dressed.”

Thus Christmas Evans went on, picturing in his never-to-be-forgotten way the return of the restored demoniac.

Well, we cannot all be Moodys or Christmas Evanses, but we can all get some of their life into us. We can all come out of the ruts, and stay out. We can all remember that religion is no mouldy, dead-and-alive affair, but a vivacious, exhilarating joy. We can make the Sunday-school hour for our scholars the brightest hour of their week; and in it all we shall only be illustrating the joy of the Lord, that thereby we may win them to its abiding strength.

CHAPTER XV

A TEACHER BY POST

WHEN I was a boy I had many Sunday-school teachers, but one, most faithful and long-continued, was a woman who is now in heaven. I do not recall a word she said to me in all the years of her class instruction, and yet she is probably the most influential teacher I ever had, in any kind of school, because of three letters she wrote me at intervals of about a year.

I was in the town and was seeing her every day. There was no apparent necessity for a letter. However, the fact that she wrote those letters to me made a tremendous impression upon me. They were well-written letters, and inspired a respect for her literary ability. They were beautifully neat and careful in appearance; time had evidently been lavished upon them. They were tender, urgent, thoughtful pleadings for me to declare myself a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and join his church.

Well, I did not join the church till years afterward; but those letters never released their hold upon me, and were positive factors in my decision. I do not recall (more shame to me!) that I ever replied to the letters, or even thanked the writer. Perhaps in heaven she will know of these sentences, and accept the long-delayed acknowledgment.

This article is for the purpose of urging upon Sunday-

school teachers just such work as that. Remember, a letter is an event in a child's life, a rare surprise. To receive a letter—actually by post—gives the child a delightful sense of importance. The precious missive is sure to be treasured; its contents are sure to be remembered.

Nor even in the case of older persons—adult classes—is a letter despised. Always it is valued above the same words spoken. It is an assurance of interest on the part of the writer. It is proof that he is eager to spend time and strength to gain the ends of the letter. "Talking is easy," has passed into a proverb; but letter-writing—everybody knows that that is *not* easy!

Indeed, because so much time and energy are required, many teachers will shrink from this suggestion. And yet, if you do a very little of this work every day, you will be amazed to see how easily you will do it, and how much of it you will get done in the course of the year.

Much Depends Upon System.—While taking all advantage of unexpected occasions and opportunities, I should not wait for them, but I should plan this letter-writing as far in advance as possible. I should even keep a little ledger, and set up a letter-account with every scholar—just when I wrote and when I received an answer, and what the results were. I should use copying ink, and make a press copy of all my letters, to review now and then what I had written to each, and to avoid duplicating. These copies, with whatever letters I received from each scholar, I should keep in separate pigeon-holes, one to a person, striving thus to give each correspondence the individuality that these different souls need. In your oral teaching you must do mass work, chiefly; but in this

letter-writing you are doing just the personal work that is most fruitful. You can study every scholar by himself and meet his own peculiar need.

These Letters Need not be Long.—Just a line sometimes will be as good as a quire. “You gave us a good recitation last Sunday. Thank you!” Can any one doubt that those ten words, received through the mail, would send a glow to any scholar’s heart, and to his head the determination to give good recitations forever?

Yet, though the letters may often be brief, they should never be careless. Use good stationery and good ink. Bring out your best penmanship. Always stamp them and send the letter by mail; a letter sent around by the servant is not to the child a “real letter.”

Do not write at all until you can put your heart into the letter. It is the personal touch that counts. If the missives are in the least degree stiff or perfunctory, if they are written from duty and not desire, the sensitive recipients will feel it. Individualize the scholars as you write. Picture each before you. Think of his home, his surroundings, his likings, his tasks, his temptations. There is not in all the world a life like his; let there be no other letter like yours to him.

Of course this implies that you cannot use for this purpose the hektograph or other duplicating devices. For getting up diagrams, announcements, lists of questions, and similar pedagogic details, the duplicator is indispensable; but one letter written solely to Lucy Brown is worth a dozen that Lucy must share with Susan Green and Alice Barber and Grace Colesworthy.

This is not to say that a “round robin” is not a useful

variation in your epistolary labors. For example, you are absent on some delightful vacation trip and you wish to tell the whole class about your experiences, but you have no time to write each a long letter. In that case, you will place at the head of your account an alphabetical list of the class, with instructions to pass the letter around in that order.

Seek and **expect return letters**. Ask questions, and in other ways show that a reply is desired. Be appreciative of it when it comes. Often the writing of this reply will be to the scholar the best part of the experience.

I do not mean to imply that the letters should always, or perhaps often, be entirely serious. Bits of fun will brighten wonderfully your relations with your scholars, and nowhere more than in these letters. Yet I should tuck away in each epistle, however merry, some earnest hint of eternal realities.

I do not mean to imply, either, that the letters should be regular or frequent. Let them not become a burden to you, or familiar commonplaces to your scholars. Maintain the helpful element of surprise.

Once in a while I should **obtain the aid of some one else** in this letter-writing. Here is a troublesome boy, and you are a woman. You may know some young man whom the lad admires, and a manly letter from him, on fundamental matters, may, if you can bring it about, do more for the boy than all your teaching; and it will be a part of your teaching. Here is a soul "almost persuaded." A wise, loving note from the pastor or the pastor's wife may give just the needed spur to decision; and you may obtain that note. Sometimes it will be

the superintendent that can write most helpfully; sometimes it will not be an adult at all, but another boy or girl. Just bear in mind this possibility of co-operation in letter-writing. Here, as well as everywhere else, it is not good to be alone.

I find myself writing in terms of the boys and girls; but let it be borne in mind that all these suggestions apply quite as forcibly to their elders. Human nature is about the same, at eight or eighty.

Letters to Parents.—Indeed, one of the most fruitful lines of work you could follow, if you are a teacher of young folks, is the writing of letters to their parents. Not letters of complaint—strictures are always better spoken than written—but letters praising their children when you can praise them honestly, telling your plans for the children, asking their co-operation, and suggesting how it may be given. Of course these letters are not to take the place of conversation with parents, but they will be more impressive than talk, with them as with their children.

In this letter-writing you will need to guard against any suspicion of favoritism. Take an early occasion to write to all your scholars, and when you write to any scholar thereafter, let it be, so far as possible, on an occasion evidently peculiar to himself.

When to Write.—What are some of the occasions that afford good opportunities for these letters? They are very numerous, when once you begin to look for them.

Anniversaries always give a good chance. There are the seasons—the New Year, fit time for a guiding word, a twelvemonth motto; the holy Easter, that well may

prompt an invitation to the new life in Christ ; Children's Day, and Rally Sunday, the beginning and close of vacation, with suitable reminders of wise play and wise work ; Thanksgiving Day, with impulses for gratitude ; jubilant Christmas, that should bring its message of love and cheer. Lovely printed cards are available for most of these festivals ; but, even if they are used, the written word should not be omitted.

For individual work, however, more personal anniversaries are generally to be preferred. Next Sunday will be a year after Tom's joining the church. Why not a letter to him, reviewing his first year as a professed Christian, full of stimulus for the year to come? (Of course you wrote him a letter when he joined the church.) Or it may be just two years ago that Ed Ballentine entered your class. He has forgotten the date, but a cordial letter from you on that anniversary will make membership in a Sunday-school class a vastly more important affair in his eyes henceforth. Birthdays are always fit times for tender and wise counsels, and your class birthday book should be always at hand. Perhaps it is ten years since you became teacher of that class, and what more appropriate than a special greeting (which may be printed this time) to all the present and former members ?

A Correspondence Class.—I include the former members, because a Sunday-school teacher is losing much of the blessedness of this blessed relation unless he maintains it after his scholars have left the class and school, and perhaps gone out into the busy world. I know a teacher of a class of servant girls. They, of course,

make many changes in abode, but she follows them up. Thus she has formed what she calls a correspondence class; it has twenty-nine members, and each of them receives a letter from her once a quarter.

There are other occasions, many of them, that will furnish openings for fruitful letters. There are times of sorrow, when loved ones die, when sickness comes, or some disappointment or loss. Be ready then with a heartening word—not only spoken, with the meaningful pressure of the hand, but written, for reading over and over. There are times of joy, more likely to be neglected: The young man has been appointed valedictorian, has obtained a situation, has been admitted to the firm; the young woman has read a charming essay at the literary club, or perhaps her marriage engagement is announced. Why should not such occasions be signalized by letters of congratulation?

Sometimes the occasion of the letter must not be stated, as when you realize that one of your scholars is exposed to sore temptation, and you must reach out a hand to him, though in the dark. Then you will improvise an occasion from your own life. It will be a recent experience of yours, perhaps, which you want to share with him. It may be a bit of your reading, which you really must pass along. It may be a good poem, which has just come to you with new force, and you know his fondness for poetry. At such times you will be profoundly grateful that you have established the habit of writing letters to your scholars, so that such a message comes naturally from you to him.

In the main, of course, the occasions for your letter-

writing will be connected with the ordinary progress of class work. You will wish to give praise for a lesson well learned. You will wish to make assignments of special work, and you know that a request by mail will be better heeded than one by mouth. You will want to impress some thought of the last lesson, or say some word for which there was no time in the class. You will be away on vacation, or they will be absent on theirs, and you wish to maintain the continuity of the class. You will be sending messages to sickrooms, often with little gifts. Best and chiefest of all, you will want to draw your scholars to Christ, and because of their diffidence, or perhaps because of your own, you will choose to break the ice by a letter, which will certainly be followed up by personal conversations.

I have by no means exhausted this fruitful theme, but I have written enough to exhibit its wide possibilities. The teacher's art is manifold, and the best teacher is the one that is eager to teach in every way. He will follow the example of that superb teacher, Paul, and be made all things—letter-writer and all—to all his scholars, that by all means he may save some.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S BLACKBOARD

IMAGINE a secular school without a blackboard! How constantly, in our public schools and colleges, this invaluable pedagogic aid is used, adding eye-gate to ear-gate, and doubling the access to the pupils' minds! If our Bible schools are not to fall behind in educational power, they also must use the blackboard. And not only must there be one in front of the school, ready to carry its silent but forcible messages simultaneously to every brain, but each classroom must be furnished as well; or, if your classes are still jumbled together in the general pandemonium of one "Sunday-school room," none the less should each class have either a blackboard or its equivalent in an enormous paper tablet.

The best blackboard for the superintendent is on the whole a stationary one, fastened to the wall in front of the school. It is conspicuous, is always in position, and is never in the way. It should run in grooves, being supported by weights, so that any one working at it may push it up as he writes. It is best to have two boards, one back of the other, acting as counterpoises, so that as one moves up the other moves down. Thus a design or inscription may be placed upon the board behind, to be disclosed at the proper minute by shoving up the board in front. Such a blackboard has proved very satisfac-

tory in our school, and any good carpenter could make one.

If for any reason this is impracticable, a portable board may be made by almost any one, or may be bought for from two dollars up. For drawing, the best is a blackboard that is not a *board* at all, but simply a slate-surfaced canvas, stretched tight, but giving beneath the chalk sufficiently to produce the most effective shading.

While few Sunday schools have blackboards at all, of those few scarcely one uses the blackboard as much as it should, or as wisely. Blackboard work is an art in itself, and like all arts it requires earnest and persistent study.

This is not to say that the effects should be intricate. On the contrary, it is the **simple, straightforward blackboard work** that is the most attractive—outline drawing, rapidly made in the presence of the school, and clear, bold lettering.

Colored chalk may be used with good results, but only the brightest of reds and yellows for what you want to be seen from the back of the room. I have seen blackboard work in blue or green that was practically invisible twenty feet off.

Indeed, the back of the room must be your goal, for eye-gate as well as ear-gate. Whatever you write, print, or draw on the blackboard must be seen from that viewpoint, and without eye-strain, or you have bungled at your work.

For what will the superintendent use his blackboard?

In the first place, sometimes if not always he will use it for the **routine notices** of attendance and collection;

only, he will not use it in any routine fashion. For instance, he may print, with vim:—

*Present last Sunday, 231.
Present this Sunday, 210.
Was it YOUR fault?*

Or, if the collection is falling off, he may prod the school thus:—

*Collection to-day,
from 201 scholars
only 169 cents.
ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT!*

Or, if congratulations are in order, he will deliver them thus:—

COMING UP!
*Present last Sunday, 210.
Present this Sunday, 256.
GOOD!*

Or, if he wants to remind the scholars of the missionary object for which they are giving, he may use his best flourishes on the following:—

*You gave \$5.63 to-day.
That will make some Hindu
orphans rejoice.*

Two-Minute Talks.—The talkative superintendent is

so unmitigated a nuisance that I hesitate even to suggest the possible value of a two-minute blackboard talk by him at the close of the lesson hour. The two minutes are so likely to grow to ten! But if the superintendent will keep his watch in his hand and stop short, no matter where he is, at the expiration of one hundred and twenty seconds, he may place an effective "snapper" upon the lesson.

To that end a blackboard design of some sort is especially useful, both because it may largely take the place of a speech, and because so much truth may be presented in a form so portable. No programme for this work can be laid down. A man's own ideas are always the best—for him, *provided* he enlarges and fertilizes his ideas by careful and frequent study of the ideas of others.

Various Plans.—Sometimes the superintendent will place on the blackboard, before the beginning of the session, three questions on the lesson. He will tell the school to consider those questions during the lesson hour, and be ready to answer them at the close.

Sometimes he will simply print on the board a Bible verse or an original sentence summarizing the teachings of the lesson. He will cover this with a sheet of paper, and at the close of the recitations he will remove the paper and have the school read the sentence in concert, several times.

This covering of a design, in whole or in part, by paper pinned on, is a useful device. It may be employed to add interest to a picture. For example, you may draw Elisha, with the horses and chariots on the moun-

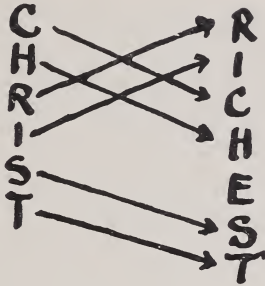
tain round about; but the latter may be hidden by pieces of paper until the proper time for disclosure.

The prevalent use of acrostics is to be condemned, except in the rather rare instances in which the acrostics are really bright and pointed, worth remembering and possible to remember. Most of them are merely fortuitous alliterations, teaching no lesson whatever. For example, this, of which I myself am the proud author:—

Saul
Seeks asses and Finds
Fame.

That is pretty bad, but not one whit worse than thousands that are solemnly set forth as condensations of Scriptural truth. They titillate the fancy, but they do not enlighten the mind. They trifle with majestic sentiments, and reduce them to the jingle of the nursery: "The Jack and the Jolick and the Jamboree."

If I may draw once more from my own devices, I would say that the following arrangement of letters comes nearer my ideal of blackboard work along this line. The lesson deals with the rich young man who came to Jesus, with the house on the sand, or some similar theme. The superintendent prints in a vertical line the letters of the word "Christ." He then says a few words about the true wealth, urging the scholars to obtain it from Christ. The "richest" man is the man who has "Christ." As he talks, the superintendent extends arrows from the letters toward the right, repeating each letter at the end of its arrow, until the diagram looks like this:—



The fact that an E must be supplied would greatly disturb a virtuoso, but does not trouble me in the least. What I want is to put a truth in a simple, rememberable, graphic form ; and that I have done.

A historical chart of great value is a simple upright line drawn on the left of the blackboard, and divided into decades or centuries, to cover the period studied during the quarter. Write the names of the characters in the proper places as you study them, and without a word your line will become a historical backbone for the quarter in the mind of every spectator.

When you begin to study Christ's life, inspire the scholars with an ambition to learn in chronological order all the seventy-five (more or less) recorded events in that life. Make a numbered list of them on the blackboard as you proceed in the study. Review them every Sunday, covering them with a piece of paper, and not disclosing each until it has been named by the school.

Blackboard Maps.—Often a map is the best occupant of the superintendent's blackboard. It should be very distinct, but merely outlines. You might call out a

scholar and ask him to mark the situation of whatever place is the scene of the lesson ; then, of the scene of the last lesson. You may mark places and ask the school to name them. When events are closely connected, you may bring in the serial interest. For instance, lines of various colors may represent the various journeys of Christ, prolonged as the lessons proceed ; or the routes followed by Paul, or Moses, or Abraham. Instead of a chalk line, you may use pins, connected by strings of different colors.

Blackboard Drawings.—The ability to draw is not, as has been shown, an essential to the successful use of the blackboard, and yet it is a great aid. No elaborate drawing is needed, nor has the superintendent, in his two or three minutes, time for it. One of the brightest blackboard talks ever given was upon the parable of the good Samaritan, and was illustrated merely by a square, with two parallel lines winding diagonally across it for the hill-road, while a short line represented the prostrate traveler, and upright lines in various places stood for the other characters of the story.

Similarly, a circle is a sufficient Pool of Bethesda, a short horizontal line amply sets forth the impotent man, a few vertical strokes will be his friends, and a scarlet upright will be the Saviour. The various steps of Saul's progress and decline may be pictured with clearness and point by an outline flight of steps, rising, falling, and stopping abruptly as the king's life plunges into the darkness of a suicide's death. All Bible stories may be depicted in this simple way. The children's vivid imagination will fill out these scanty lines, and make them as

significant as a cartoon by Raphael. They are far more helpful, because far less misleading, than more elaborate attempts, such, for instance, as a watering-pot in action which I once saw drawn to represent—showers of blessing!

In conclusion, let me emphasize the necessity of brevity. The superintendent's blackboard will be a nuisance and not an assistance if he does not confine himself strictly to two or three minutes,—merely the keystone word that binds together the impression of the lesson hour. If in any of the ways I have indicated, and all of them in turn, he can accomplish this, the dingy surface of his blackboard will become the glowing heart of the school.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AS AN AVOCATION

SOME persons take up Sunday-school work as a mere temporary employment; and of course they get from it, at the best, only transient and paltry results.

Others enter upon it as a bit of fun. Their scholars, perhaps, enjoy with them the novel experience; but their labor is as evanescent as a summer holiday.

Still others assume the teacher's task as a disagreeable duty. They clinch their teeth and go at it in bulldog fashion, worrying all pleasure and profit out of it, until the task is dead.

And yet others are personally aggrieved when asked to take a Sunday-school class, and if in a manner forced to comply, they nurse the wrong in a rebellious heart. Small wonder that their scholars are rebellious also.

A Life Task.—But there are some—happy is the Sunday-school cause in that there are many—who pursue their Sunday-school task in a far different spirit. To them it is a life-task, a glorious life-task; second, necessarily, in their time and thought and energy, to their secular employment, but not second in their eager devotion. In other words, there are many to whom the Sunday school has become an avocation.

An avocation is the side calling which runs parallel to

the main calling, as a delightful country lane lies parallel to the beaten country highway. One flees to it with a sense of relief from the noise and bustle. A well-loaded wain may pass along it, but leisurely. The cherry blossoms hang over it, and the primrose peeps from the banks.

An avocation is not a luxury, it is a necessity. It affords that variety which is often more than the spice of life, being its flexile water; without it life grows parched and withered.

An avocation is not a mere sport, though it is a recreation—it re-creates. Indeed, it must have substantial aims and worthy processes, or it cannot withdraw an earnest man from his routine employments and give him that change of activity which is the most profitable and enjoyable of rests.

To an avocation one is called, just as much as to a vocation. It is an error only less serious to choose the wrong avocation than to select the life-work that God does not design for us. To certain avocations, as to certain vocations, men are called by the combined voices of opportunity, duty, ability, desire, and conscience,—some or all of them. In those they will be successful, and nowhere else.

Now if all this is true, it makes a vast difference in what way one takes up his Sunday-school work. If God intends the task for you at all, he intends it as an avocation, not as a jest, a burden, an experiment, or an affront. And the only way to succeed in anything—Sunday-school work or anything else—is to do it in the right spirit. A task is half determined by your impression of

it. Pond-like, it takes its color from the mental sky that broods above it.

An Ideal Avocation.—And Sunday-school work, if you take it up as your God-given avocation, is an ideal one. Those that undertake it in the wrong spirit do not see how that can be. “I always come home from my class with a headache,” sighs one. “Those boys will be the death of me!” groans another. “I don’t see why *I* have to teach that class, when Miss Jones could do it just as well as not,” frets a third. They do not understand how the Sunday school can afford an avocation.

But the true teacher understands! There are trials in her path, to be sure, but they are swallowed up of the joys. Her Sunday-school work is not a depression, but an exhilaration. It does not weary her, it actually rests her. She does not dread it, but anticipates it with pleasure. She does not come away from it with a headache, but with brains pleasantly excited and a warm glow at the heart. She dreams of it. It has become one of her most cherished ambitions. She has no thought of giving it up, ever. In short, it is her avocation.

Very likely this feeling has not come at once. Very likely at first she was called to her avocation only by the voices of opportunity, ability, duty, and conscience, the voice of desire being silent or opposing. But as she has persisted honestly in the work, it has become her delight.

The Sunday school is an ideal avocation because it so nobly enlarges life. It gives broad views of time and events. It acquaints us with the richest history and biography. It introduces us to the loftiest philosophy. Things the angels themselves desire to look into are its

common themes of study. A knowledge of the Bible is a liberal education. "Fear the man of one book"—when that one is the Book.

Moreover, the avocation of Sunday-school teaching will further your vocation, whatever it is; and this not merely through the wide reach of information into which it will lead you, though that is much, and the quickening and uplifting of your mind, though that is more. The art of teaching is the art of self-command and the command of others, the art of tact, the art of impressing yourself—what you know and think—upon the lives around you. And this, as any successful business man understands, is the very essence of success in a worldly calling.

It is a still further proof of the value of Sunday-school teaching as an avocation that it is helped by your vocation, whatever it is. The two fit in together, as they should. Your teaching is vitalized by your daily work. From that work you draw your most effective illustrations. In that work you test the truths you teach, and you carry the verification back to the Sunday school. St. Paul wove many a matchless chapter of the Bible as he wove his tent-cloth; and "he that will not work shall not eat," of spiritual or material food. The best Sunday-school teachers, other things being equal, are the busiest men and women of affairs.

Make it a Business.—Making Sunday-school teaching a vocation means making a business of it, though a subordinate business. Time must be given to it, generously, and as regularly as to the business that affords you a livelihood. In the definite planning for the week which the wise always do, you will plan for a little Sunday-school

study every day, and for each day its definite portion—the Scripture basis for one day, the facts of place and time another day, commentaries the third, illustrations, applications, teaching plans, review, for the remaining days. In the same way you will plan out your year's work, as a farmer plans his plantings or a merchant his purchases and sales.

Nothing will be left to haphazard, not even the place of study. It will be the cars, during the half-hour to town and the half-hour back again. Or it will be in the kitchen while you are waiting for the dinner to cook. Or it will be in your bedroom, the first thing every morning.

And in addition to the regular time and place, if Sunday-school work has really become your avocation, your thoughts will turn to it instinctively and pleasantly in moments of leisure at any time and place. It will be "on your mind," as tennis is on one's mind if one is a tennis enthusiast, or as the chess-lover carries with him the latest fascinating problem. You will always have with you, in some conveniently portable form, the lesson text for the coming Sabbath, or even for the entire year. You will always carry a little blank book, in which to jot down Sunday-school ideas or plans or thoughts on coming lessons, or the illustrations that are so easily gathered but so easily lost if they are not fastened at once.

Learn All You Can About It.—There is no permanent zeal without knowledge, in an avocation, as certainly in a vocation. If you are truly making the Sunday school your life-work, you will be eager to learn from books and

periodicals all you can about it. You will subscribe to one or two journals of instruction for teachers, just as the golfer or hunter has his magazine for outdoor sports. You will read the many wise and helpful volumes on Sunday-school teaching that recent years have brought us, and you will collect a little library of them for constant study.

Especially, you will seek to peruse that open book, **the experiences of other teachers** whom you may meet. You will not miss a convention of Sunday-school workers, if you can help it, any more than a genuine yachtsman would miss a regatta. You will take a Sunday now and then to visit some other school and observe the methods there. You will drop in on the secular schools, and learn most profitably from their ways of doing things. You will watch the most successful teachers in your own school also, and will copy their methods. You will arrange jolly suppers and evening gatherings for your co-workers, for acquaintanceship and for the sharing of ideas. One of the joys of an avocation is the companionship with the pleasantest people which it brings, and in this particular no avocation of them all is to be ranked above Sunday-school work.

Grow in Your Work.—Many teachers in our Sunday schools tire of their task because they are not growing in it. Knowledge is not enough for enthusiasm ; it must be expanding knowledge. Every year should have some definite plan for advance, some programme of improvement. The live worker is eternally dissatisfied. Certain months of normal study should be a part of every Sunday-school year. Now it will take up Bible geography ;

again, Bible history in outline; during other years, the story of the manuscripts, reviews of the books, biographical studies, the study of some era, Bible botany, the doctrines, miracles. Let the aim be clear-cut, and not too ambitious for sure attainment. Allow no year to close without a sense of positive gain.

Be a Sunday-school Specialist.—And yet, with all this ardent advance into the wide fields of Bible lore, in his practice the successful teacher will be a specialist. Choose the grade for which you are best adapted. It may need some experimentation to discover whether you are best with older scholars or younger, boys or girls or men or women. But having settled that point, hold to the one line of work. If it is the tiniest children, insist on their leaving your class as soon as they are able to read. If it is boys, be watchful for the time when they should go on to the young men's class.

And Polish Your Specialty.—Learn all there is to know about kindergarten methods of the Sunday school, if that is your chosen field; or about adult classes, if it is there that you shine. A man who canoes a little, bowls a little, cycles a little, plays chess a little, and paints a little, will have no ardor for anything. Do your one thing in the Sunday school, and do it supremely well.

Have regard, that is, to the vast value of **cumulative experience**. That is the chief reason why the Sunday school is to be made a field of effort for life. As class after class comes under your influence, imbibes your ideas, is strengthened by your character and fired by your faith, how gloriously the totals rise! Men and women by hundreds look back upon the faithful Sunday-

school teacher with a grateful affection they rarely feel even for their teachers of public school or college. "It was he, it was she," they remember, "that taught me the way of life, that introduced me to my Saviour and to the concerns of eternity." And theirs will be an eternal gratitude.

The Glorious Rewards.—Ah! what avocation presents rewards comparable to this? The philatelist collects stamps, but the Sunday-school teacher stamps the divine image upon deathless souls. The biblomaniac gathers first editions, but the Sunday-school teacher presides at the making of first editions of men. The art amateur searches out the earliest impressions of great etchings, but the Sunday-school teacher himself makes the first impressions of imperishable works of art. The camera enthusiast transfers to paper the rarest glimpses of nature, but the Sunday-school teacher exposes to the heavens the lens of a human soul, and forms a picture that will endure after all photographs have faded away. When the laurel wreaths are awarded on the Recognition Day, none will be greener than his, or more beautiful in the eyes of the angels.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW TO BUILD UP THE ADULT BIBLE CLASS

No defense should anywhere be needed for the motto, "All the church in the Sunday school, and all the Sunday school in the church." Indeed, all Christians will admit that no one ever grows too old for Bible-study, or becomes so wise that he is not likely to gain much from Bible-study with other Christians.

The rub comes in the practical working out of this commonly confessed truth. The children—we can send them to the Bible school; but what impulsion can force us to send ourselves? There are so many church services, anyway. And they are so long. And we are so tired. Oh, hum!

Thus it comes about that the adult department is by far the most poorly attended, in proportion to its possibilities, of all our Sunday-school departments. How to build up the adult Bible class is everywhere the most pressing of Sunday-school problems—pressing, that is, unless it is ignored altogether, and the Bible school of the church becomes a Bible kindergarten. To help solve that urgent problem, and add to the Sunday school its most important element, is the ambitious purpose of this chapter.

The Class Room.—Perhaps the first essential for a good adult Bible class is a place to put it. Theoretically,

the attention of adults is more easily held and retained than that of children. Practically, if you want a strong and growing adult class,—set them off by themselves! This necessity, proved by experience, arises largely, I think, from the need of overcoming the popular impression that the Sunday school, after all, is a childish institution.

It may not be easy to find a room for the adult Bible class. Many thousands of Sunday schools are obliged to meet in the church auditorium. But generally it will be possible to carry out for the older folks a plan often used for the children, and make a temporary room with curtain partitions, supported by uprights that rise from sockets in the floor. A method very likely to be still more acceptable, and yet one rarely tried, is the use for the adult class of some private house near the church, where one large room, or two connecting rooms, will make an ideal meeting-place.

But whatever mode of separation from the school is adopted, the older members should join with the youngsters in the opening exercises, that they may lend their visible influence to the school. Nothing will so magnify the boys' and girls' respect for Bible-study as the sight of a goodly number of men and women engaged in the same pursuit. For the sake of this example it is also desirable that the adult class join the school in the closing exercises, though they will need more time on the lesson than the rest of the school, and should be privileged to take it.

The Teacher.—If a suitable meeting-place is the *first* essential for a successful adult class, the *chief* essential

is a good teacher. And here men often make the mistake of thinking that no one but a remarkable Bible student can teach an adult class well. On the contrary, the class may well contain many a man or woman who knows more about the Bible than the teacher, though of course the teacher's scholarship must be such as the class will at least respect. But the teacher must be an able executive. He must be skilled in conducting debates, tactful in managing people, winsome in drawing out knowledge and opinions, decisive in closing discussions, in stating conclusions, and in guiding the deliberations of the class. He must be a pedagogical general.

For example, in some of the most successful adult classes about which I have learned, the teacher himself does very little talking. He is an enthusiastic and inspiring presiding officer. A week in advance he has made his assignments. Mrs. Tillinghast will give a summary of the events intervening between the last lesson and the present. Dr. Hopkins will say a few words introductory of the lesson, its central theme, its subordinate themes, a sort of prospectus. Miss Gilmore will give the facts regarding the time of the lesson, and Mr. Gravenhurst will describe the scene in which the lesson is located. Mrs. Roper will bring up points from the parallel passage in another book. Major Dayton will present a synopsis of an important magazine article bearing on the lesson. Certain difficult phrases will be referred to Professor Goodrich for an explanation, and certain Oriental customs to Mrs. Goodrich. Mr. Davenport will conduct a discussion of the main teachings of the lesson, and Mr. Edgerton will close the half hour

with a statement of the principal points to be remembered. Such a programme as this, briskly engineered by a capable chairman, would make few demands upon him, would enlist the leading members of the class, and would be vastly more effective, in the long run, than even the most brilliant teaching which is largely a monologue.

The Lecture Plan.—Not that the monologue should be excluded altogether. Indefensible in teaching children, an occasional lecture adds dignity and attractiveness to an adult class. Indeed if, as occasionally happens, a few members of the class monopolize the time and drive away other members by tedious and obstinate discussions or harangues, then the teacher must adopt the lecture system to save his class. And always the class will appreciate the introduction now and then of some specialist for an extended talk. A traveler fresh from abroad, for instance, may describe the lands you are studying about. A physician may discuss the medical side of Luke's writings. Some scholar learned in ancient history may review recent discoveries among the monuments. A Christian scientist may give his views on the reasonableness of miracles. For such a talk, of wide scope and fertilizing power, the lesson for the day may profitably be omitted or postponed.

In adult classes the methods of the university are to be used, rather than those of the grammar school. Before starting on a new course of study, the teacher should consult the class and get their ideas as to the best methods to follow. Sometimes, even when there is no other reason for it, a sense of freedom and of mastership is

gained by departing for a time from the International lessons and striking out on a line of your own choosing. Always the International scheme is to be made the servant and not the lord of the adult class.

Something to Advertise.—Whether such a departure is made or not, something special to advertise is quite essential, if you would build up the adult department. It may be a series of talks, by specialists, on attractive Bible subjects. Some novel programme of class-work may be adopted, for a quarter or a year. A single new feature, such as a class library or regular class socials, may be introduced.

And then, when you have obtained this something to advertise, advertise it! Let the minister make it a text for a pulpit discourse on the adult class and why all adults should be in it. Set forth the inducement on emphatic placards, posted in the church and about town. Use the church paper, the town paper. Best of all, send a postal-card invitation (printed with type or on a manifold) to each adult member of the congregation, and then follow it up with personal urgings.

A class organization is most helpful in such a canvass, and in the general conduct of the class; it aids greatly in carrying out the ideal of an adult class that the members of the class should do as much as possible and the teacher as little as possible! There should be a president, who should conduct the business of the class; a secretary, to keep the constitution, records, and rolls; a treasurer, to receive the contributions, and obtain the lesson helps and other supplies. The class should always vote on the supplies and on the gifts to missions or charitable ob-

jects. When the teacher must be absent, the substitute teacher should be elected by the class, and the secretary should obtain his services.

Committees.—Especially, there should be committees. The membership committee will seek to add to the class roll. It is a good plan to “vote in” every one that should join the class, and then appoint one member of the class a special committee to wait upon the member-elect and urge his acceptance. Of course this system of elections is only for the purpose of making folks feel that they are desired, and, after they join, that they “belong.” If it degenerates into the spirit of caste and clique, the class is ruined. It should all be as democratic as the gospel, and the wish for new members may well be proclaimed at each meeting, the secretary announcing the gain or loss, if any, of the past week.

Then, there should be a **social committee**; for regular class socials, perhaps every two months, will do much to build up the adult department. These should be held, in turn, at the homes of the members. Elaborate refreshments should be rigidly barred. Some pleasant entertainment should be provided, but much time should be left for friendly conversation. Joint socials, with other adult classes similarly organized, are among the delightful possibilities. So are class picnics (no, I am *not* forgetting that I am writing about adults!), class attendance in a body on pleasant and profitable entertainments, and class excursions to libraries, museums, and places of historical or scenic interest. Such social episodes will do wonders to promote the class *esprit de corps*.

Another useful bit of machinery is the “porch” com-

mittee, whose duty it is to scan the church congregation, note the strangers, give them a hearty invitation to the class, and, if they consent, escort them thither. Various other committees will arise, as the work progresses, and an adult department, thus efficiently organized, will become a genuine power, not only in the school, but in the church and the community.

The Bible Central.—For all this pleasantness, however, the kernel of success lies, of course, in the solid Bible instruction given and received. Every detail of the class life must centre upon the Scriptures. Bibles should be plentiful in the class room,—enough for each scholar to have one. Let some bring the revision, let others bring the Greek, the Hebrew, the French or German. There should be maps on the wall. There should be a blackboard. Fundamental reference books should be at hand; if possible, a class library. Induce the scholars to buy commentaries and Bible dictionaries, the teacher combining orders so as to get them at a reduction. Pictures on the wall, photographs of Bible scenery, a collection of Oriental curios—once set the class to gathering illustrative material, and it will flow in upon you.

At the end of each lesson the adult class should carry away the satisfying sense of definite accomplishment. The use of a syllabus is a help to that end,—a set of topics or of questions, printed from type or on a manifold. These syllabi should be on uniform paper, that they may be preserved, and used on review day. Every lesson should close with a review, or swift summary. When review day comes, more or less elaborate essays or talks may be given by members of the class, taking up

points of special interest connected with the past three months' work. Do not be afraid—or, rather, train the class not to be afraid—of occasional written tests, introduced on any Sunday. Frame questions that are comprehensive, yet that can be answered in a very few words. Confine this exercise to ten minutes or less, and promptly excuse all who shrink from it. Indeed, in all the work of the class it is well to recognize in your mind a class nucleus of real students who are ready to be questioned by name and called upon for any service, and the class visitors and onlookers who prefer, because of timidity or ignorance, merely to sit and listen. While recognizing this division, seek constantly to carry the class members from the second class into the first.

Interest the Men.—It generally is the *men* that are most ready to take part in the class discussions, and, alas! it is everywhere the *men* that are hardest to interest in the class. For this reason (quite unfairly, I grant, but in their unselfishness the women will forgive it), the class work should be made to have a predominantly masculine character. In every way, cultivate the men. Introduce themes that will interest them. Draw your illustrations from business life. Make practical applications that will fit the work of men. Appoint a special "men's committee," to enlarge the masculine membership of the class. The women—God bless them!—will come of their own accord.

Of course no one imagines that these few suggestions will completely solve the difficult problem of the adult department; but they will go far, I am sure, toward a solution of them, and they will point out the way to

meet the unnamed and unexpected perplexities when they arise. Only, let every Sunday school be assured that an adult department is possible for it, and an adult department that is an entire and glorious success.

CHAPTER XIX

WHAT TO DO WITH THE HARDER LESSONS

What Makes a Lesson Hard?—Usually the fact that it is not suited either to the circumstances or the mental development of your class. It may be too difficult for them, like a lesson from the first half of Romans for a class of little fellows; or it may be too easy for them, like a lesson in the over-familiar story of Moses in the bulrushes for a class of grown-ups. A lesson from the minor prophets that would be almost meaningless to a child of ten, might transform the whole life of that young Christian ten years later. The problem is to make Hebrews clear and interesting to the child, and to cram the account of Daniel in the lions' den with new significance for the adult. The problem is to transmute the milk for babes into meat for strong men, and the meat into the milk. It is not an easy problem, but it is one full of fascination and profit. Indeed, at bottom, it is the great problem of the teacher's art,—to clothe things hard and forbidding with the grace of naturalness and a winning charm.

Therefore my advice to the teacher is that he do not groan over the harder lessons fretfully; or shirk them, perhaps, by substituting easier ones. Leap upon them manfully, as foemen worthy of your steel. As Mark Tapley was overjoyed when at last he encountered a

situation wherein it was some credit to be jolly, so do you rejoice in a fair opportunity to test your pedagogical skill.

Discover, if You Can, the Reason Why the Lesson was Selected.—Our International Lesson Committee are men of sense as well as scholars of erudition. They have in mind the whole school, and not one department of it. They realize deeply the immense interests entrusted to their care. They never do their work haphazard, nor select a lesson without good reason for the selection. If you can discover that reason, much of the difficulty of teaching the harder lessons will at once be removed.

Then, meet the remaining difficulties fairly, and not with babyish evasions. If it is the second chapter of Ephesians which furnishes the lesson, do not prepare a few perfunctory points, and take to the class some article or story that is half appropriate, with which to pad out the time. Recognize the true topic,—death without Christ and life with Christ,—and determine that that particular truth shall become a part of your scholars' character.

Do not hesitate, if the scholars or the other teachers complain about the lesson, to admit that it is difficult; but appeal to their pride, as you have already aroused your own. Tell them, as Plato was fond of telling his disciples, that "*good* things are hard." Exhort them to face the problem with determination, sure that in the toughest rock lie hidden the biggest diamonds.

Do not Permit the More Difficult Lessons to Steal a March Upon You.—It is an excellent plan to examine carefully the lessons for a year in advance, and discover

which are going to present the greatest difficulty. Bear them in mind, then, for months before you come to them, and think about each one of them until you have found a solution for its perplexities. Thus upon some of the lessons you will focus two or three times as much labor as upon the easier ones.

The superintendent, too, should give the teachers seasonable warning when a hard lesson draws near, urging them to make special preparation for it. He might wisely arrange to give more time to the teaching on that particular Sunday. Perhaps a greater service would be to procure some bright, suggestive speaker, who will take part of the time usually given to the opening exercises, and speak to the school, just before the lesson, not spoiling the lesson by anticipating its interest, but skilfully leading up to it and inspiring a zest for it.

When the difficult lessons come along, then, if ever, is felt the need of a teachers' meeting, and then is the best time to start one, if your school lacks that unequalled promoter of efficiency. It would prove the entering wedge if the superintendent should call the teachers together just to study, under competent leadership, the lessons that present immediate difficulties. If they are brightly managed, these temporary meetings may well be transformed into a permanent institution.

The minister, also, should lend a hand at this juncture. If he takes the interest in his Sunday school that a live minister will, the difficult lessons will appeal to him as a peculiar opportunity for service. Just before the lessons are to be taught he may preach a sermon, applying to

them some illuminating principle that will prove to every teacher a guide through their labyrinth. If this is not practicable, he may assign the subject for some prayer meeting, advertise it thoroughly, and thus turn upon the hard lessons the wisdom of the entire church—that is, if your prayer meetings are the real thing!

The Teacher's Harder Study.—But, after all, the fate of the difficult lesson rests with the teacher, and not with the superintendent or the minister. Until he has made the lesson easy to himself, let him not expect to make it easy to any scholar. He must read more than usual, seeing the lesson through many eyes. He must think more than usual, digesting and making his own these manifold thoughts of others. Especially, he must study the difficult lesson in the large, see it in all its relations, get a sharp view of the events connecting it with preceding lessons, and look down upon the entire field from above, as one comprehends geography from a balloon.

Simplify.—And then, having learned all you can about the lesson, see how much you can forget! That is, do not try to teach all you know. Fix on the central theme, and do not admit a single detail that would confuse and distract. Adopt a simple outline. For no lessons is this so necessary as for the hard ones. Far more than is often realized, the teacher's art is the art of balance, of selection, of proportion; and the more difficult the subject, the greater the need of observing this principle. A very few things taught, and taught so as to be remembered, will make a successful lesson.

Learn the Scholars' Difficulties.—So much for your mastery of the lesson; but before you can adopt a teach-

ing plan, you will need to form a clear idea of the difficulties your scholars will find in their preparation. There is no better way to discover these than by actually going over the lesson with some member of your class. Note where he hesitates and stumbles and appears stupid; note the questions he asks; observe the effect of your explanations, and use it all as indications of the way that lesson should be taught.

A method even more thoroughgoing and effective is to hold a midweek meeting of your class for that especial lesson—a study meeting, while the Sunday hour is to be a recitation meeting. This study meeting might be held at your house, with some pleasant social features. After an hour spent together around a table, poring over Bibles, Bible dictionaries, Bible atlases, concordances, and other helps, not only will the class be brought closer together than ever before and drawn nearer to their teacher, but they will have gained a new insight into the way to study—and all this in addition to a start on the difficult lesson which will make the coming recitation meeting a delight and a triumph.

Some Novelty.—It is well to save for the harder lessons whatever bright novelty you wish to add to your teaching methods. By introducing it at that time you signalize the lesson as one of unusual importance, you add to its interest, and you insure its being better remembered.

For example, you may not yet have set your class to writing paraphrases of the Scripture text; you may not have divided the verses around, asking each scholar to write out a commentary on his verse, to be read in the

class; you may not have prepared an outline of the lesson and given copies of the outline to each scholar as a guide to his study; you may not have prepared a set of questions on the lesson, requesting each member of the class to write out his answers before Sunday, so that they may be compared by the class, which will then vote on the best answer to each question. Any one of these little schemes would insure an exceptional amount of study and arouse the scholars to do their best.

Special Essays.—Some lessons can best be treated by essays on their most difficult points, all members of the class sharing in the work; if the same subject is assigned to more than one scholar, so much the better. For example, if your lesson is taken from the great argument in Romans for justification by faith, ask three members of the class to write five-minute essays on the book, giving its general outline and the course of its argument. If the lesson is chosen from one of Jeremiah's prophecies, ask three scholars to write five-minute essays on the circumstances of Jeremiah's life and the evils against which he preached. Looking at a theme from three points of view, and repeating three times the fundamentals of the lesson, will greatly help to clear up the teaching and fix it in the memory.

A Programme.—For variety, try sometimes a regular programme in place of the recitation. Let each scholar have a neat copy of the programme, to use in following the exercises and to take away with him. If your class meets in a separate room, announce the plan a week in advance, and ask the scholars to invite outsiders in to hear the exercises. If the lesson, for example, is on

Christ's talk with Nicodemus, you might have one scholar prepare a talk on Nicodemus, the office he held, and why he came to Jesus by night, together with what is known of his later history. Another scholar will read an essay comparing this conversation with Christ's other conversations that are recorded, as to theme, manner, and results. A third scholar will write an essay on the new birth, its meaning and necessity. A fourth will give a Bible-reading, comparing the passage in John with other Scripture on the same subject. A fifth will read a commentary on the topic,—some passage from an eloquent sermon, perhaps. Two others will recite hymns or other poems upon the new birth. Still others will relate instances of the new birth, stories of modern conversions. You might close with a portion of Drummond's chapter on the new birth in his "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," and with an earnest prayer for all present that have not been born again. Such a programme would signalize any lesson, and transform it from a hard, dull one, to a red-letter day in Sunday-school history.

A Lecture.—A reversal of this method may be best, on occasion,—just a long talk, a lecture, given by the teacher or by some one called in for that particular lesson. For instance, the passage for that Sunday may be taken from the middle of the book of Job. Hardly could you do better than place a Bible in the hands of each scholar, and then let either you or some one who has made a special study of Job, go through the entire book, reading the finest passages, giving a running commentary, exhibiting the dramatic form and the structure of the great

poem, and showing through it all its framework of superb doctrine.

At the end of such a talk, or at the beginning, there might be a "quiz," brisk questions being fired back and forth. Even better would be a written test of the scholars' grasp of the subject, the questions being so framed that adequate answers can be very brief.

Similar to this lecture from some outsider is the plan of an exchange of classes. If you take a new class and your class has a new teacher for the difficult lesson, what is lost from lack of knowledge of the scholars may be more than counterbalanced by their interest in the fresh face and novel methods. The new broom may sweep clean even the cobwebs of a tangled lesson.

Sometimes a novel lesson help will serve the same purpose as a new teacher. Provide each scholar with some book, paper, or magazine which will help him study the lesson—something altogether different from the lesson help he is in the habit of using. This loan will be in itself a forcible hint for harder study than usual, and curiosity, if nothing higher, will lead to an acquaintance with the new book or paper.

Whatever method is chosen for the difficult lesson, bear in mind the especial need of a review the next Sunday, and plan to make it unusually thorough. Indeed, a review for several Sundays in succession, or until you are sure the subject is mastered, would be entirely in place. For there is no excuse for the Sunday school except as things are *learned*.

It will be noticed that throughout this chapter I have spoken of the difficult lesson, and not of the lessons that

are hard to teach because they are too easy and familiar. Nearly everything I have said, however, will apply, with little change, to the latter problem as well as the former.

Be sure, teachers, that whatever difficulties surround a lesson, they may be conquered by a willing spirit and a thoughtful mind. Every lesson is a rough block of marble, with a statue inside it. Often, very often, it happens that the more hammering you must do to get the statue out, the more lovely appears the statue when at last it is discovered. To work, then, with hammer and chisel, and grace and grit to your elbows!

CHAPTER XX

THE BIBLE IN THE CLASS

WHATEVER else is taught in the Sunday school, it is mainly a school for Bible-study. "Bible school" is a far better name for it, were not the other name so firmly established. And yet there is many a class that does not study the Bible, but merely studies about it. The folly of this is sometimes recognized, and at once there springs up an unreasoning prejudice against lesson leaves and lesson helps of all kinds; whereas these are of the greatest usefulness, it being only necessary to see that they do not drive out the Bible itself, but that this fundamental text-book is in the hand of every scholar, and is constantly and intelligently used. Let me give a few suggestions, first in regard to getting the Bibles into the Sunday school, and second in regard to using them when they are there.

Appeal to the parents, perhaps by a circular letter or a public address, asking them to provide Bibles for their children. Let the school arrange with a dealer to furnish Bibles at a discount, and appoint one person to receive orders from parents and scholars. If any parents are really too poor to buy Bibles, the school officers should quietly present copies through the teachers.

Usable Bibles.—It is quite necessary, if these Bibles are to be used, that they should be usable. In all other

books for children we sensibly insist on large, clear type. Why should the children's Bibles be illegible with fine type, thin paper, and poor print? The children's other books are bright with beautiful pictures and brilliant with handsome bindings. Why should their Bibles be the most unattractive volumes they possess? Is this the way to exalt the Scriptures in their childish minds?

No; economize in any other direction in the Sunday school, but be liberal when you buy the children's Bibles. Get opaque paper, large type, leather binding. Let it be a reference Bible, with an atlas at the end, and all the helps of a teacher's Bible. If the parents can be persuaded to have their children's Bibles interleaved, they will add much to their possible value. And I, for one, would never give a child the King James version. He is to be a child of the twentieth century, and he has a right to the most accurate obtainable translation of the words of Holy Writ, our Victorian revision.

Take the Bibles Home.—The Bibles being provided, should they be kept at the school? That plan saves trouble, but it wastes scholarship. A good Bible, and all the scholar's own, is the teacher's best inducement for home study; but not unless the Bible is carried home. Every class should have a number of extra Bibles, for the use of children that forget theirs, as well as for the use of visitors; but ingenuity and persistence will prevail upon the scholars to bring their Bibles from home.

The girls, and especially the boys, may feel shamefaced about carrying their Bibles through the streets. Though they will not admit it, they are woefully afraid of seeming "goody-goody." If, however, the entire school enters

into a covenant to bring their Bibles, and young folks are seen scurrying, Bible in hand, down every street, what all boys do no boy will be afraid to do. The main difficulty is to get the fashion started.

For this purpose I should have a careful record kept, by individual names in each class, of the Bibles brought every Sabbath; and I should include the record, with comparative statements, in the secretary's report to the school. In addition, I should organize a "B. B. B."—"Bible Bringers' Band." Obtain badges bearing the cabalistic letters, and permit every scholar to wear a badge so long as he brings his Bible regularly; but if he forgets it any Sunday, keep his badge for a month from that date. Present photographs of Bible scenes to all the scholars that can show a perfect "B. B. B." record for a year.

But there is no use in getting the Bibles to the school unless you use them when there; and, moreover, a bright use of them in the class will go far to insure their being brought. So we will pass to our second inquiry,—how to utilize the Scriptures in our class work.

The Teacher's Own Bible.—In the first place, it must be urged that teachers use the Bible as the basis of their own study—not the teacher's monthly or the commentary or any other help; all these, though absolutely necessary, are distinctly secondary. Thorough familiarity with his great text-book will alone enable the teacher to appeal to the Bible for constant confirmation of his statements, for illustrations, for side-lights, for additional facts. Certainly for every use of secular careers, such as those of earth's Cromwells, Arthurs, Victorias, Wash-

ingtons, and Miltons, our Bible teachers should give their scholars citations of sacred biography, the lives of Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Paul. We are to emphasize *Bible-study*, and not, as is too often customary, the study of Jewish history along lines parallel with the history of Greece and Rome. If the teacher has not a manifest love of his Bible, and a flashing, finger-end acquaintance with it, there is no hope that he will inspire his scholars with either the love or the knowledge.

Also, the school as a whole must use the Bible. It is the universal custom to read the day's lesson at the opening of the session, generally the superintendent and school reading alternate verses. Let this reading always be from the Bible and never from the lesson leaves. Often let it begin before the assigned lesson, or extend farther, or even let a selection be made from another portion of the Book. Open the school and close it with the reverential reading of some psalm in concert, and often change to fresh passages. In this way let the Bible become the book of the school, and it will far more likely become the book of the scholar.

In the class itself, a good introduction to the lesson is the simple reading of the text in some version unfamiliar to the scholars, who will note the differences as they occur. The American version may be used in this way, the various renderings of the Bible in Scotch, in ordinary modern language, and in foreign tongues. If any scholar understands French, or Latin, or German, or Greek, encourage him to bring to the class the Scriptures in those languages.

Illuminate every lesson with light from all the Bible.

Set your scholars to constructing their own reference Bibles. Assign each verse of the lesson to a scholar, and teach him how, at home, to find other Scriptures illustrating its teachings, customs and facts. In the class recitations all this work will be combined.

Bible-marking, by some simple yet comprehensive plan, will greatly promote the scholars' use of the Bible. At the end of the year the school may place on exhibition all the Bibles that have been thus used, giving prizes, perhaps, for the best work done. Such an exhibition may be made a most profitable occasion. In addition to the marked Bibles, a collection of all sorts of interesting Bibles may be placed on view,—Bibles in many languages, old Bibles, rare Bibles, big Bibles, little Bibles, various versions, Bibles with special histories—a very carnival of Bibles. A little entertainment may also be provided, consisting of class drills in the use of the Bible, essays on the Bible and its history, recitations of striking Bible passages, and the like. All this will add to the school's interest in the Scriptures.

Some Bible Drills.—I have mentioned Bible drills. Let me name a few. Such sprightly exercises as the following may occupy the first five minutes of every lesson. The scholars will enjoy them, and they will give the class familiarity with the Bible more rapidly, perhaps, than any other method, because they contain the element of play. Here are a few modes of Bible drill:

1. Finding verses: "First Corinthians 2: 5,"—to see who can first turn to the passage and read it.
2. The subject of the verse given concisely, the book

and chapter, but not the verse. Who will first find it? As: "Read the verse on giving in Acts 20."

3. Famous passages indicated more obscurely, to be found as quickly as possible. For instance: "Isaiah's description of the Messiah. Paul's chapter on charity. The list of the twelve apostles. The Magnificat. The epistles to the seven churches."

4. Who will first find a text on temperance? on love? on prayer? on sin?

5. Who can first find the sentence, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace"? The phrase, "Apples of gold in baskets of silver"? The proverb, "A soft answer turneth away wrath"?

6. Who can find the first reference to Paul that occurs in the Bible? to Moses? to Christ? to Elijah?

7. Turn to the shortest verse in the Bible. The longest chapter.

8. Find the Ten Commandments. The Shepherd Psalm. Moses' Psalm. The Sermon on the Mount. The Lord's Prayer. Paul's speech on Mars' Hill.

Such exercises as these may be devised in great numbers by the teacher, and used until the scholars develop a remarkable facility in the searching of Scripture. Occasionally let a member of the class be appointed drill-master, and put the scholars through their paces instead of the teacher. The drill must be conducted in a sprightly way, and with entire good humor, if it is to be a success.

You will not go far in the class use of the Bible without discovering the need of a class concordance and Bible index. Both of these, as found in our teacher's Bibles,

are so incomplete as to be more tantalizing than useful.

The presence of Bibles in the class is an especial advantage at the outset of the lesson, when you study the connecting links of history binding the current lesson with its predecessor. If the scholars have not studied these intervening passages, have them open their Bibles, glance rapidly over the proper chapters, close the books, and then tell, as called upon, the facts they have thus gleaned.

Once in a while, when you want to stimulate some special scholar, it will be well to appoint him (or her) "**Bible man**" (or "**Bible woman**") for the day. Then all questions relating to other parts of the Bible will be referred to him as they arise, and he will be expected to consult his Bible and discover the answers.

Of course the teacher will take care not to confine this work to the few familiar books of the Bible. Open up to your scholars Hosea as well as John, Job as well as the Acts, Ezekiel as well as the Psalms. Make it a point to associate with each lesson as many Bible books as you can, thus giving your scholars each week a wide view over Holy Writ.

A little record, easily made, which will serve as a decided incentive to the use of the Bible, is the following: Get your scholars, as soon as they are sure they understand everything on any page of the Bible, to write in the corner of the page the initials of their name; they have made that page their own. At least one page will be marked each Sunday, and your class will be eager to see the conquered area grow.

Apply to the problem of Bible-study tangible little plans like this, showing your scholars definite results growing slowly but surely, and they will soon become fascinated with the noble occupation, and will carry it on from these little beginnings to the great results of genuine scholarship.

CHAPTER XXI

PATRIOTISM IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

How can the study of the ancient Hebrews, so far away in space and time, be made to promote patriotism among our modern girls and boys?

The difficulty is all on the surface, for the problems that good citizens are trying to work out in our country are essentially the same problems that faced the best men and women of Bible times. What better illustration of the evils of nepotism and of absentee government than the story of Eli and his sons? Where, even in our own days, so favored in that particular, could one find a more admirable specimen of a demagogue than Absalom? Do not our labor troubles echo the difficulties that arose among Pharaoh's brickmakers, and also among Solomon's builders, led by that "walking delegate," Jeroboam? What an example does David's great sin furnish of the relations between the private and the public life of rulers! How many points in our Bills of Rights were anticipated by the episode of Naboth's vineyard! Goliath was made to know the power of a single young patriot, and Pilate's example should suffice to make manifest for all time the futility of mere expediency as against justice.

Indeed, our modern civilization is based on the Bible; and, quite naturally, the Scriptures are the best textbook of patriotism.

The Patriotic View Broadens the Lesson.—It gives a new interest. It wakes up the scholars, who may have become satiated with the ethical view, and tired of steady moralizing. It is especially helpful in classes of boys; and these embryo citizens begin to see religion as the manly thing it is when they hear its application to men and affairs of the present-day world.

To teach patriotism—in the Sunday school or anywhere else—one must be a patriot. If the great theme is on his heart, the teacher will find it in every lesson.

Nor is it enough for a man to be a patriot in theory and feeling only—if such a thing is possible. No one can be an effective teacher of patriotism without a knowledge of his country, its history, its constitution, its government, the condition of its citizens. Few matters are more profitable themes for the teacher's study than social conditions and economic problems,—the life of the poor, the temptations of the drunkard, incitements to gambling, the manifold misery of the slums, the often equal wretchedness of wealth. A knowledge of such facts will quicken sympathy and enlarge the understanding. It will vivify and explain much that is in the Bible, and the Bible in turn will solve the problems of the present day. Hardly can you do your scholars a more valuable service than by showing them how to bring the inspired wisdom of old into our modern living.

The newspapers must be among your constant allies in this work, because they mirror your country's conditions—not perfectly, ah, no! but better than any other medium. You must yourself be a vigorous newspaper-reader, not confining yourself to one paper, nor to the

papers of one party. It would be an excellent plan to instruct your class also in the art of reading a newspaper wisely,—an art so few possess. To this end appoint one scholar each week as the “newspaper reporter” for the class. Go over the papers with him every day, showing him what to read thoroughly, what to read only by title, and what to pass over as summarily as if it were poison. Show him how this incident and that are related to the truth of the next lesson, and get him to make before the class a report of such events. This exercise will greatly aid in making the Bible a vital book for the children.

Just one word of perhaps unneeded caution. Be careful in this newspaper work to treat fairly all parties, and all points in dispute among good people. Remember that you are likely to have among your scholars or their parents representatives of all parties, and always discuss principles rather than parties or party leaders.

The teacher of patriotism should read **the writings of the great patriots** wherever he can find them, and copy passages for future use. Note especially any reference to the Bible or any parallel to Bible events, and place copies of such utterances in your Bible at the passages which they illuminate. These echoes of the Bible in the words of great patriots will demonstrate to your scholars, more impressively than many words of your own, the truth and power of the Book.

Most Sunday-school lessons have a **national as well as a personal aspect**. The teacher should not neglect the first, though it is confessedly more difficult to study and present. History in itself has a profoundly ethical

value, if it is properly taught. There is far too little use by Sunday-school teachers of such impressive and fascinating histories of Bible times as the works of Geikie, Stanley, Edersheim, Sanders and Kent. They will teach you to take broad views, and will enable you to win and hold the most thoughtful and ambitious of the young people.

Study Secular History.—It is a good practice for a teacher always to have on hand, as well, some secular history—the story of Holland, say; of Switzerland, of Greece, of England, of Germany, Russia, the United States, Japan. A new country might well be studied thus each quarter, noting as you proceed all illustrations of Bible truths and parallels to Bible history, jotting down the references on the margins of your Bible.

For patriotism must come to have, to you and your class, a meaning far larger than the boundaries of your own country. You must come to see how all countries of the modern world are bound together by a network of vital interests, so that when one suffers all the others suffer with it. The highest patriotism strives to improve its own land, that it may the more effectively bless the world.

Study Biography.—In emphasizing the need of the study of history, I do not intend to imply that biography is to occupy a secondary place, for biography is only history taken to pieces and seen at close range. The life stories of the Hebrew heroes are best illustrated by the biographies of modern patriots—Moses by Lincoln, Jonathan by Wolfe, Gideon by William of Orange. The more you study the Bible and the more you study

national biography, the more fascinated you will be with the correspondences and illuminations you will discover.

If you have a boys' class—and many a class of girls would also find it interesting—organize it into a **Christian Patriot's League**. Design a banner for it and a badge. Hold occasional special meetings, especially on the national holidays; but the regular meetings will occupy the five or ten minutes of the Sunday-school hour that are devoted to the patriotic aspects of the lesson.

Make use of **patriotic recitations** whenever you can. All your scholars should know by heart the national songs, so that they may be repeated in concert when they are suitable.

Portraits of eminent patriots will be useful to add vividness to such work as I am outlining. They may be cut from periodicals, neatly mounted, and kept in alphabetic order ready for the proper lessons. Pictures of landscapes with soul-stirring associations, and of houses connected with the lives of national heroes, may be used in the same way.

The lessons that may be taught from such studies are personal, as well as national, because a nation can be pure and strong only as its citizens are capable and good. The great international question of arbitration, for instance, is fruitful in its suggestions of individual kindness and justice. The long struggle of the Hebrew nation with idolatry has a thousand applications to the corrupting idols that we are all likely to set up in our souls.

A word must be said about the superintendent and the general exercises of the school, and how they also can teach patriotism.

Occasionally some Christian office-holder may be obtained for a few words to the school. This address will mean much, especially to the boys, and will exalt immensely in their esteem not only the Sunday school but also the entire subject of religion.

As the national holidays come along, recognize them in the general exercises of the school. Use decorations in which the flag is prominent. Have some scholar give an appropriate recitation. Select the songs with reference to the occasion. Remind the school of the day, and in a few words urge upon the scholars the love of their country and loyalty to it.

Patriotic Prayers.—Most important of all, let the superintendent, as he opens the sessions with prayer, never forget the country, but in thanksgiving and petition lay its interests before the Almighty. The scholars themselves may offer a patriotic prayer, committing to memory some such hymn as "God bless our native land," and repeating it reverently in concert, standing as they do so.

Many more suggestions and plans might be added, but what I have given is enough to direct the attention of Sunday-school workers to this most important but sadly neglected subject. If the next generation is to be one on which our country can safely rest, its patriotism must be planted now while they are young. If that patriotism is to be substantial and fruitful it must be upheld by religion, and in no place better than the Sunday school can the love of country be intertwined with the love of God.

CHAPTER XXII

“SUNDAY-SCHOOLY”

“OH, that book is Sunday-schooly!”

“Pooh! It’s a Sunday-schooly song!”

“Pshaw! That’s Sunday-school talk!”

Who hasn’t heard such sneers? And who, that is a Christian, has not been pained by them?

There is no denying it: to affix the term “Sunday school” to a thing is to discredit it in the eyes and ears of many persons. “Sunday-schooly” is a sort of synonym for “namby-pamby” and “goody-goody.”

A False Impression.—Now, all well-informed Christians know that this common impression is a false one. They know that the Sunday school is one of the noblest of earth’s institutions, manly and womanly, and the making of men and women. How are we to correct this false impression? How are we to exalt the adjective, “Sunday-school,” in the dictionary of the world?

The fact that these sneers have their origin with the ignorant and the malicious does not free us from the necessity of refuting them. Though they spring from the brains of infidels, they soon come to influence the thinking even of believers; and, though at first they are caught up by those that know nothing of the Sunday school through experience, before long they fill with doubt and unrest even the teachers and officers of our schools.

Of course, jests and criticisms, though false, are in a sense tributes to the vitality and power of the Sunday school. Men do not ridicule and oppose dead things and nonentities. But this sort of tribute the Sunday school can best do without.

It is the measure of truth in these innuendoes that barbs their satire. Those are false friends of the Sunday school, however loud their laudations, that will admit no need of improvement in the institution. In fact, I believe that within the present century the Sunday school has to take as many and as great steps in advance as it took during its first hundred years. It is for all Sunday-school workers to accept hints for progress from whatever source, even from those who deserve to be classed among the foes of the Bible school.

“Sissy Talk.”—Many of the sneers for which “Sunday-schooly” stands are based upon the alleged “sissy talk” heard in Sunday schools. “Now, my dee-ah children,” the teacher or superintendent is represented as saying, “you all want to die and go to heaven, don’t you? As many as would like to, may hold up their hands. Yes, that is good, very good indeed, my dee-ah children.”

The comic papers, and the humorous departments of some of our magazines that should be in better business, often put such silly harangues in the mouths of supposed visitors, whom the superintendent asks to “say just a few words to the children.” He begins in some such way as this:

“You must be good, children, and mind your paws and maws, and your kind teachers in the Sunday school.

You love your kind teachers, don't you, children? As many as love your teachers, hold up your hands. That is exceedingly gratifying, children; a very creditable manifestation."

Of course, those that are familiar with the modern Sunday school recognize this as an absurd caricature of the kind of talk heard there. It may have been heard in the Sunday schools our fathers attended; at least, the comic writers have established a tradition of such talk. It may still be found in some out-of-the-way schools. But in the average school this wishy-washy mode of addressing the children is about as rare as Hindustani.

How can we give the lie to this slander, and discredit its perpetrators? Only by seeing to it that no "baby talk" is allowed in our Sunday schools. It is always wiser to talk a little over the heads of children than to "talk down" to them. They will forgive ponderous sentences, and will respect them even when they do not understand them; but baby talk they will not forgive. Teachers should constantly keep in mind the most mature of the class, and not, in their care for the more stupid and childish, neglect the quick and eager scholars. Most children, indeed, are intelligent beyond what they disclose except to the most keen and sympathetic questioners, and teachers are generally safe in trusting them a little beyond what appearances and replies would warrant.

And then, as to giving invitations to address the Sunday school, that should be done very seldom, and with the very greatest care. It is a good rule to allow no one to use those precious moments of the open session except

on business, with a definite purpose in view. The privilege of addressing a Sunday school should be guarded as jealously as if it were Congress or Parliament.

Pert Replies.—One of the stock themes of the comic paragraphers, in connection with these imaginary talks to the Sunday school, is the pert reply put in the mouth of some urchin. It would be easy to make a large collection of these Sunday-school sayings of children, most of them impudent, all of them absurd, and nearly all of them manufactured or grossly exaggerated. We have all heard Sunday-school speakers that questioned the children; but who of us has ever heard a reply so startlingly ignorant and ingeniously comical as those in which the comic papers abound?

These alleged “smart” sayings injure the Sunday school. They make us appear to be instructors in pertness. They represent our schools as full of forward chits, tolerated and even encouraged. I do not think I am overrating the mischievous influence of these skits.

To counteract them, we must, in the first place, refrain from quoting them. Unfortunately they are too often repeated by thoughtless Christians, and I have even heard them related in talks to the children themselves. A fine example for them! In the second place, when we hear these stories, we need not laugh. Our sober silence will be a protest, even if we do not care to utter an open rebuke. And in the third place, when we talk to the children, we must make our questions so explicit, our thoughts so clear, and our bearing so reverent, that such answers as I have described would be most unlikely to be given.

The phrase, "Sunday-school books," has been for many years a term of contempt. In the old days of dismal memoirs, whose heroes and heroines were always preternaturally good and invariably short-lived, this contempt might have been deserved. Now, however, when the religious literature for children is so varied, attractive, substantial, and in every way admirable, "a Sunday-school book" should be a title of honor. But old prejudices die hard, and this among them.

I suppose the only way to erase this impression regarding Sunday-school books is for each worker to insist on the literary as well as the religious value of all that are placed in the particular library with which he has to do. The school should have a library committee, selected with great care, and made up of the most intelligent Christians in the church. When you get a capable committee, keep them as long as they will serve. The books should be chosen, not merely because they are good, but because they are good for something. They should be well-written as well as well-intentioned. Crude English, extravagant or silly plot, and morbid views of life should not be tolerated. The catalogues of all publishers should be scanned, and correspondence should be had with other workers, to learn of the best books they have discovered. In proportion as our schools avail themselves of the splendid range of fascinating religious books by the best authors now accessible, this reproach of "Sunday-school books" will die away.

Sunday-school Music.—Similar things may be said of Sunday-school songs. There is not a cultivated musician whose lip does not curl at the mention of them.

“Twaddle!” he exclaims. “Rubbish! Silly and meaningless doggerel set to trashy, tinsel tunes!”

In the main, it is to be feared that the musician is right, and this in spite of the fact that unexceptionable Sunday-school song-books exist—books made by Christians of true literary and musical ability, whose songs sing themselves sweetly to the mind and memory as well as to the tympanum. But where these are sold by the thousand, the jinglers and janglers are sold by tens and hundreds of thousands.

It is not necessary to set the children to singing “Old Hundred” (though that would not hurt them) in order to avoid these tumty-tum tunes with their empty words. I certainly am not urging a Sunday-school programme of *Te Deums*. It is entirely possible to provide the school with music that is not heavy and words that are not beyond the children’s understanding, yet both music and words shall be of the purest beauty. And in proportion as that is done, will this old sneer at the Sunday school pass away.

“**Sunday-school teaching**” is another phrase that carries with it a certain contempt. It is supposed to be slipshod, the reverse of thorough and scholarly. It is compared unfavorably with that of the secular schools.

Often, of course, the reproach is justified, though the unceasing wonder should be that, with voluntary attendance, with only half an hour a week, with little or no study on the part of the scholar, and with unpaid teachers, the instruction in our Sunday schools is as good as it is. But it is constantly growing better. Our ideals are rising. The advantages of grading and of examinations

are coming to be understood. Normal classes and teachers' meetings are more and more used and valued. Definite results are sought from the scholars, and, being sought intelligently and persistently, are gained. The discredit of Sunday-school teaching is being removed.

“Hop, Skip, and Jump.”—Much of this discredit has sprung from what has been so repeatedly urged against what it has pleased some to call the “hop-skip-and-jump” method of Sunday-school study. In reality, if we admit that some parts of the Bible are to be studied more carefully than others, it is hard to see how we are to avoid a little saltatory exercise in getting to them.

But the sting of the criticism may be removed only by careful attention to the surroundings of every lesson, and the interspaces between them. We may linger longer in Genesis and Joshua than in the intervening books of the Hexateuch, but let us walk through them, however rapidly, and not jump over them. Let us take broad views. Let us give our scholars an understanding of the Book as a whole. Let us *rightly* divide, when we divide at all, the Word of truth.

The Traditional Picnic.—There are many traditional features of the Sunday school at which men poke fun. One of them is the Sunday-school picnic, that imaginary compound of ants and sandwiches, jelly and trousers, lost boys and distracted guardians. We must remove the slight foundation of truth on which this hilarious fiction is built, if we want to see it fall to the ground. Our Sunday-school picnics must be well-planned and well-officered. Enough older folks must go to give the affair dignity and stability. They must be made worth

while,—not mere occasions of fret and anxiety. Sufficient amusement must be furnished, carefully thought out in its minutest details. Let the food be abundant and good, but do not allow the affair to centre on the feast. Aim at higher things, at the school's best interests through merry intercourse of scholar and teacher and the ingathering of strangers. If this is done, the antique jests concerning Sunday-school picnics will be forgotten.

The Reluctant Scholar.—Another picture in the Sunday-school gallery, as popular fancy has it, shows the unfortunate boy, in stiff, best clothes, led unwillingly to Sunday school, looking longingly at the bold, bad boy who taunts him from behind a fence, he being on the way—lucky fellow !—to the trout pool or the swimming hole. The view of the case is reinforced by numberless jokes based on the Christmas tree, and the suspicious increase of the school just before the season of gifts.

A growing number of Sunday schools are aiding in the demolition of these jests by a vigilant eye on the attendance all the year around, and especially by making the school so attractive that the children will need no compulsion, but will attend gladly, and even feel vastly aggrieved if compelled to remain at home.

There are other slurs to which the Sunday school is subjected. There is the traditional collection, with its buttons and its lead coins. When our schools everywhere adopt the envelope system of class collections, and set before the scholars positive aims for their giving, adopting some different object of benevolence perhaps every month, then we shall hear the last of this slur.

Also, there is the traditional superintendent, patronizing the boys, chucking the girls under the chin, hammering his call-bell, and preaching a tedious sermon on the lesson in the course of the opening exercises. He, too, is passing from men's minds, as school after school hunts out for its superintendent a warm-hearted, level-headed business man, of few words, of prompt decision, and of quiet manner.

No Sunday-school worker should disregard the caricatures of this beloved Christian institution, or carelessly leave them to die a natural death. The honor of the Sunday school is in our hands. We cannot afford to close our eyes to its faults, and we must learn to disentangle the helpful truths from the malicious falsehoods in these sneers and jests; we must profit from the former while we repel and rebuke the latter.

As all workers, from the most humble teacher to the members of the International Committee, thus seek with fearless zeal the improvement of the Sunday school, it will grow better and better, and the ridicule of it will grow less and less, until some day these jests will be swallowed up in universal love and applause.

CHAPTER XXIII

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

I AM the proud possessor of a Sunday-school hobby. Really, my stable is full of such hobbies, but one of them towers high above the others, like the wooden horse of the Greeks in a modern toyshop.

I have bestowed upon this hobby horse the descriptive name, Proveit. Proveit is a determined and sagacious steed. He is an old warhorse, and bears the wounds of many a battle. Blow but a single note upon the bugle, and my good steed, Proveit, pricks up his ears.

His food is facts, ground fine in the mill of logic. He can do his mile a minute any day, yet he does not disdain the plow and the harrow. He is worth a score of those witless nags named Evasion, Sayso, and Takeit-forgranted.

I am not shut up to a single horse; thank heaven, no Sunday-school teacher is; but if I were, that horse should be Proveit, and I should count on his pulling my pedagogical carryall triumphantly over any road and up to any goal.

In fine, to drop allegory, which so easily becomes tangled and tiresome, I proclaim myself a bigoted enthusiast regarding the use of Christian Evidences in the Sunday school. If you will let me tell you a bit of my own experience, it will explain my zeal, and serve me, perhaps, as a text.

When I was a boy, I had the most devoted of Sunday-school teachers. They were holy women, for the most part, consecrated, painstaking, prayerful. They did more for me than the conceited boy realized, and more than the still-conceited man can ever hope to deserve.

But one thing they did not do for me: they did not discover my doubts; and since they did not discover them, naturally they did not dispel them. I was only a boy, but I doubted the inspiration of Scripture, the authenticity of miracles, the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, the atonement. Unitarian tracts came my way, and Unitarian preaching also, fascinating and forcible, and I was more than half convinced.

All this time I was going regularly to Sunday school, answering orthodox questions in the orthodox way, and my teachers knew no more about my real mental condition than about the Shah of Persia's. One blessed woman among them wrote me a letter once a year urging me to join the church, and one noble man asked me once if I called myself a Christian. I replied that I did, and he was satisfied. I did, but I wasn't.

Then, as I became a young man and a teacher of others, I entered upon that period of inner struggle which more young men pass through than is often realized, the struggle between faith and infidelity. My friends, my desires, and all the influences that descended from Baptist grandparents and Presbyterian parents urged me to orthodoxy. My own unassisted and un-instructed reasonings pushed me irresistibly into the blackness of doubt.

“Believe it, because it is in the Bible,” I was told; but I was also told that the Bible required me to believe that Joshua caused the earth to stand still, and I was teaching astronomy. I wanted the Bible proved, before men proved statements by the Bible; and no one, in Sunday school or outside it, went that far.

It was at this time, when I was greatly troubled over the matter, that I dug up out of a dusty corner in the college library a book I shall always hold in reverence,—**Mark Hopkins's “Evidences of Christianity.”** Well do I recall the thrill with which I read that volume. It opened a new world to me, the world of reason, as against mere authority, in religion. I had been taught to reason in a circle: “This statement is the inspired truth of God because it is in the Bible. It is in the Bible because it is the inspired truth of God.” Mark Hopkins's “Evidences of Christianity” lifted me out of that circle. It showed me that Christianity stands confidently among the provable facts. It disclosed the reasonableness of the supernatural, demonstrated the authenticity of the Scripture record, and established a foundation for faith on which, with joy and surety, I have built my stronghold of creed. I have since found other books of the kind, which I prefer, and the ideal remains to be written; but I and thousands of others look forward to meeting Mark Hopkins in the land of open vision, and thanking him for the manly service he has rendered.

Now that service, I contend, should have been done me in the Bible school and the church.—My faith or infidelity should not have been left to the chance dis-

covery of a book on Christian Evidences. Nor should the same risk be run in the case of any child.

I insist that the Bible is not even half taught until we teach the reasons for believing it, and at every point arm our scholars against the skepticism of the age. Unless they are able to give a reason for the faith that is in them, nowadays they are not likely to keep any faith in them very long, still less to inspire faith in others.

The study of Christian Evidences should be interwoven with all lessons in all grades, and in the older classes exclusive attention should be given to it in occasional courses of study. It will put backbone into Bible history, vivify all your exegesis, vitalize all your theology, bind your lessons together with a sturdy thread, and give your scholars the zeal of crusaders, each assuming that royal title, Defender of the Faith.

I know that there are objections to the teaching of Christian Evidences in the Sunday school.

In the first place, it is said that the discussion of Christian Evidences suggests more doubts than it settles. The assertion is: "Take it for granted that the Bible is in all points true, and it will not occur to your scholars to doubt it." I wish that were so, but it is not, as every teacher and every parent will testify. "Where did all the frogs come from?" the children are sure to pipe, in studying the Exodus. "Could I walk on the water, if I tried, as well as Peter? Why not? Where did Cain get his wife? If Jesus was God, why did he pray to God? Where did the ravens get the food they brought to Elijah? Why was Achan's whole family killed with him?"—What

teacher is there to whom such questions are not as familiar as the alphabet?

The impression made on many a worried teacher is that these puzzlers are brought out merely to perplex and annoy. That may have come to be the case, but I believe that at the start they were honest inquiries, not to be repeated if honestly and satisfactorily answered.

But when the teacher does not meet them fairly, when he hesitates and shuffles, when he procrastinates and evades, the young folks come not unnaturally to the conclusion that their questions cannot be answered, that the teacher is afraid to meet them, and they grow up with the uneasy impression that religion is based on unsoundness and unreason.

Very likely the scholar will go on, at least for a time, meekly answering the teacher's leading questions as the teacher plainly desires them to be answered, nourishing discontent and rebellion in his breast. Sometimes an incautious query on the part of the usually prudent instructor will disclose the lurking infidelity. Then there will be a flash of defiant, bold denial that will startle the teacher and the class.

Well do I remember such an instance. It was a young man, a church-member of long standing, a college graduate and then a teacher, and he had been under my Sunday-school guidance for months without my suspecting his doubts. One day, in private conversation, I touched somewhat probingly his inner convictions, and to my amazement he confessed almost absolute infidelity. Brought up in the atmosphere of easy acceptance of Christianity which I have described, joining the church

without any careful scrutiny of the foundations of his faith, the intellectual clashings of college life had knocked to pieces that flimsy structure of belief, and he found himself without Christ and well-nigh without God.

It should not have been possible for that young man to remain in my class for those months without my discovering his real attitude toward the gospel. Such an incident should not be possible in any class. Probably I am not far wrong in saying that nine-tenths of our classes would yield just such cases if the teachers should search out, frankly and sympathetically, their pupils' true opinions.

These young folks are thinking, nowadays, far more deeply than we give them credit for. I was impressed, one Sunday, by some conversation I heard on the way home from a certain church. The sermon had been a plain, simple talk on some matter of ethics, easy of instant understanding in every part, and very likely simplified by the good man who preached, in the hope that something of what he said might be appropriated by the lambs of the flock. Two of those lambs were walking before me,—two young boys; and what do you think they were talking about? The theory of evolution!

That was in Boston, you say. Yes, it was; but everywhere, I believe, we older folks are greatly underrating the capacity of young heads for serious thought. Infidelity floats in the air as pervasive as gnats in August. Young folks are keen to catch up hints, and shrewd at expanding them. This is in truth what it is so often called, "an age of doubt," and the Sunday school should be the church's main barrier against that doubt.

So far is it from being true that a full and frank discussion of Christian Evidences will suggest doubts and promote skepticism that I believe the very opposite to be the case. I believe that a great deal of the prevailing skepticism, a skepticism much more far-reaching than is often appreciated because it so frequently lurks in the church itself,—I believe that much of this pervading doubt and unrest is due to the universal neglect of **Christian evidences** in teaching and preaching.

Especially I believe that the measurable desertion of the Sunday school and church by the young men and the men full-grown is due to the same cause. Any neglect to place Christianity on the manly basis of proof, un-rhetorical, clear-headed, logical proof, is certain to alienate the men. There are no statistics—would that there were!—dealing with the masculine as distinct from the feminine element in our Sunday schools and churches, but any one's observation will prove to him that young men and older men are chiefly found, other things being equal, in those churches where a definite system of doctrine is taught with the most aggressive and sturdy consistency. There are few things that men like better than a Q. E. D.

But I can hear some one raising this objection: "**The Bible is an inspired book,**" he says, "and I want to teach it like an inspired book. It is not like other books. It is self-evidencing. It needs no assistance from human reason, no bolstering of human logic. I need only present its great truths and leave them to do their certain work. To apply human logic is to discredit the authority of Scripture and virtually to deny its inspiration."

In answer to this objection,—an objection which is merely felt quite as often as it is urged openly,—I wish first to say that I do not like the words, “human logic.” Logic, whenever it *is* logic and not mere pompous assertion, is divine. Reason is of God and not of the dust or the devil.

Unreason is to be feared, always ; but reason, never. It is by reason and logic that we conclude the Bible to be inspired, and the doctrine of inspiration has nothing to fear from reason and logic. Indeed, it has everything to fear from their opposites.

It is a commonplace of religious history that the churches have been weakest under a régime of bald authority, and strongest where reason and logic, evidence and proof, are most thoroughly used in their behalf. Protestants, of all men, should remember that fact. To say, “You must believe this because it is in the Bible,” is to adopt the method of the Church of Rome, and is to insure a plentiful and increasing crop of skepticism.

First prove the Bible, and then draw your proof-texts from it. How it dishonors the inspired Volume to assert that an exhibition of the evidence of its inspiration will detract from its authority! Nowhere is that authority stronger than among those who can give a reason for the faith that is in them.

If you want to bring up in the Sunday school a set of young people who will revere the Bible as the veritable word of God to sinful, suffering men, who will esteem as sacred its every sentence, draw their lives from its pages and defend it from all hostility, you will accomplish this not by emotional appeals, skin-deep illustrations, flimsy sym-

bols, and domineering *ipse dixits*, but by the quiet laying of reason's foundation stones, upon which the lofty structure will rise, course bound to course with the firm cement of logic. It is in the conviction that in no other way can the authority of Scripture be laid with convincing and permanent power upon the hearts of men that I urge the teaching of Christian evidences.

But yet one more objection is raised against this proof-giving that I advocate, namely, that it will lead to long and profitless debates in the lesson hour. I have even heard it charged that Sunday-school teachers, at a loss for material with which to fill up the time, deliberately provoke discussions of knotty points, a favorite being, of course, the question of miracles.

Such wrangling is as far as possible from my thought, and is entirely unnecessary in the teaching of Christian evidences. Indeed, I think it far more likely to take place when Christian evidences are not taught than when they are. If these points of doubt are evaded, the suspicious and indignant scholars are likely, from mingled contempt and mischief, to bear them in mind and bring them up again and again.

On the contrary, whenever a query is raised or a difficulty presented, it should be met promptly, heartily, and decisively. Give a sharp, clear-cut statement of the reason, the evidence, the proof. If you cannot do it, frankly admit your ignorance and promise to have an answer ready a week hence; then keep your promise, though you must consult every doctor of divinity in town. The next thing to wisdom, you know, is honest confession of ignorance.

If the question is not prompted by honest doubt, say that you will answer it in private, after the class. Then do it. Take the same course if the question is one quite foreign to the lesson theme. Also, if there is a tendency to debate after you have stated the reason or the proof, cut it short by the same device, postponing discussion till after the school is dismissed. No teacher should allow himself to be side-tracked, nor will he, if he knows his business.

I have just said that doubts are to be met and answered as soon as they are expressed in the class. I should go further. **Doubts are to be answered before they reach the point of expression**; nay, before they arise at all in the scholar's mind. The best teaching of that straightforward thing, Christian evidences, is by indirection. The class is unconsciously fortified against skepticism.

It is a great mistake for the teacher to introduce the subject of infidelity and openly to combat it. Ingersoll would have made very little stir in the world were it not for the advertising he got from Christian denunciations.

The teacher should know at what points the Bible is assailed most commonly. To that extent and for that purpose only, he might well have a personal knowledge of infidel writers. He cannot guard his class against the foe unless he knows from what quarter and in what manner they will attack. But the less the scholars know about the names of infidels, their books, and their arguments, the better. Some teachers and preachers apply the principle of vaccination, and introduce a little of the virus of infidelity, thinking that by counteracting this

specimen portion they will render their scholars immune against the disease. Generally they are merely implanting an appetite for more.

The teaching of Christian evidences for which I plead is positive, and not negative; instructive, and not combative; a riveting of the structure of faith rather than a launching of thunderbolts against its assailants. The teacher should remember his own doubts of former years, and recall how he overcame them. He should talk with his scholars frankly and frequently on these great themes, so as to note the beginnings of doubts before they themselves are quite aware of them. In preparing every lesson he should ask himself this invariable question: "What points in this passage will seem difficult of belief, either now or in after years? What opportunity does the lesson give for the strengthening of faith on the fundamentals of Christianity?" It is a preventive work that I am advocating, and not an aggressive work; the planting of good seed, thick and sure, and not the uprooting of weeds. Class wrangles and fretful arguments are no more necessary an accompaniment of the teaching of Christian evidences than of the teaching of geometry.

One other objection, and one only, remains to be mentioned. Some are afraid that persistent and thorough attention to Bible proofs will put religion on a merely intellectual plane. No one would deprecate this more than I would. All religion is more of the heart than the head, and the deepest truths of religion are inscrutable mysteries to the mind. A merely intellectual religion is as dead as a skeleton in the physiologist's laboratory.

But if a merely intellectual religion is a skeleton, a

merely emotional religion is invertebrate, and it is about as bad to have flesh without a backbone as to have backbone without the flesh. Even the heart must have a bony casket for defense and support, and even the most profound religious mysteries, such as the atonement and the Trinity, are believed upon reasonable grounds or not actually at all.

There is far more danger, with the average teacher, that Sunday-school instruction should give too little for the head than that it should give too little for the heart. Heart appeals draw their material from common life and feeling. They are easily made, and, usually, as easily forgotten. They suggest themselves in connection with all lessons, they are fully treated in all our lesson helps, they demand for their study and presentation little originality or labor.

Christian evidences, on the other hand, require some research and study. One must be prepared for objections and further inquiries. Material for this mode of teaching is not easily accessible, nor to be mastered without diligent application, nor to be presented effectively without originality and skill. Often, I fear, it is the sluggishness of teachers, rather than their assumed fear of placing religion on a merely intellectual basis, that holds them to questions of feeling and conduct, and away from discussions of evidence and fact.

But if the teacher will seriously undertake these studies, if he will earnestly set him to the firm establishment of his faith and the faith of his scholars, he will find in the study of Christian evidences an unparalleled mental stimulus. It is history, and history that deals with the

noblest men and women. It is philosophy, and philosophy concerned with the loftiest themes. It is literature, and literary criticism of the highest and most enlightening type. It is logic, and logic dealing with no abstract syllogisms, but with the nerve and blood of human existence. The study of Christian evidences will arouse the minds of teacher and scholars alike, lift the lesson hour from the furrows of stale custom, and vitalize the entire Sunday school with a sense of achievement and mental mastery.

Nor will the heart aspects of religion suffer from this attention to the head aspects. Show me the reasonableness of miracles, and the Red Sea and Carmel, Cana and Bethesda, speak with new authority to my soul. Prove to me that John wrote his Gospel, and the fourteenth chapter breathes a balm it could not have for me before. It is impossible to derive the highest comfort, inspiration, and guidance from a book that may be largely a forgery, however beautiful the forgery may be. It is impossible to feed upon the Scriptures while one is harassed with half-confessed fears that inspiration is a mere dogma, the supernatural an outgrown fancy, and miracles only myths. Prove Christ a veritable fact, as real as Washington or Victoria, as real as your next-door neighbor; show your scholars that the report we have of his words and deeds is as trustworthy, to say the least, as any column they will see in to-day's newspaper, and at once the Bible becomes a vital Book, and Christ becomes a speaking Friend, and the discovery breathes into all the doctrines of Christ's religion the breath of life.

Some may be inclined to inquire with what age one should begin to teach the evidences of Christianity. Should proofs of the Bible be introduced in the primary department? Should the youngest scholars be taught, for instance, of the possibility that God used a strong east wind to sweep the Red Sea bare before the Israelites? Shall we tell them how the Bible was brought together and how it came down to us? Shall we cast our teaching in the easy traditional mold, or shall we base our teaching, at the very start, on the best and wisest we know?

Well, the best and wisest is none too good for the children. Certainly it will discredit the Sunday school if, even by implication, we teach them anything they must unlearn in later years. Assuredly we must speak the truth, even to babes.

But how much of the truth shall we speak? That is the question. Their young minds are eager to spring at you with Why? and How? It is as great a mistake to ignore their mental perplexities, to deprecate them, palter with them, or put them off, as it is in the case of their elders. Such treatment is pusillanimous and mischief-breeding. No; reason must be allied to our religious teaching from the beginning, and must be expressed as fast as it can be understood.

This is not to say that Christian Evidences will be taught to our little ones in the same way we use with older classes; far from that.

My little girl once asked me, "Why can't we see God, if he is here?" How should I answer her? Should I enter into an explanation of the difference be-

tween spirit and matter? How could I explain it when I don't in the least understand it myself?

I answered her with another question: "What do you think is the reason?"

"I guess it's because we haven't the right kind of eyes," she replied, and added, "We get a different kind of eyes when we die, don't we?"

Well, of course, I assented, and of course I didn't try to go farther. Indeed, I am not sure that the wisest man that ever lived could go farther.

"Why did Jesus let them kill him?" the child may ask, remembering the mighty miracles the Saviour wrought. Shall we talk about the atonement? Shall we introduce the doctrine of justification by faith, which is to be the great comfort of their maturity?

We shall make a simple beginning toward the fulness of that wondrous truth. "Jesus wanted just to be a man," we shall say. "He wanted to be like us, and suffer as we do, and even die as we do, that he might show how God loves us." That does not go very far, but the child can go as far as it goes, and it is true as far as it goes.

In that spirit I would approach all the child's questions. The letters the child uses are the same as those used by Bacon, its figures the same as Newton's, but its combinations of letters and figures must be immeasurably simpler. "C-a-t cat," however, is on the way to the *Novum Organum*, and "twice two is four" is on the way to the *Principia*. Even the little folks can learn the elements of Christian Evidences.

One inquiry sure to arise when teachers begin seriously to consider the teaching of Bible proofs is, "What

shall I do with the higher criticism?" That is a real perplexity, for these are days of many revolutions in Bible study, and views regarding the origin and history of the sixty-six sacred books are advocated in orthodox pulpits which would have excommunicated their promulgators a century ago. Whether the book of Daniel was written under the Maccabees, whether Deuteronomy was produced after the division of the kingdom, whether the fourth Gospel is John the Apostle's or some very different John's,—such questions as these will arise in disheartening number before the teacher has gone far in his own Bible studies. That he should meet these doubts fairly and solve them manfully ought not to need to be said.

There are current two views of the higher criticism. One makes it a dragon, and runs away from it; the other makes it an idol and worships it. Both are wrong. **Only one question is worthy to be asked** regarding a point of higher criticism, and that is, *Is it true?* Not, what evil results will flow from it if it is true, but, *Is it true?*

Some of the modern Bible scholars are irreverent, flippant, conceited, and slash with their opinionated pen-knives in the face of all the moral and literary convictions of mankind. Other are cautious, profound, reverent, of sympathetic insight, of masterly comprehension. When such men, out of their vast erudition and in eager love of God and his Book, choose to speak, it befits you and me to keep silent and listen. Teachers in our Sunday schools should know enough about modern Bible studies to distinguish between these two classes of scholars, to avoid the one and cleave to the other.

It is the height of folly to insist that our grandfathers discovered all there is to know about the Bible. It is also the height of folly to fear that any discovery will shake the immutable truth of God. It is most necessary for Sunday-school teachers to maintain minds that are open to all proved facts about the Bible. How otherwise can we hope to prove the Bible? But an open mind need not be open at both ends. Whatever truth we admit, we need never let our faith fall through.

It is most necessary, also, for Sunday-school teachers to recognize the true foundations of faith. If we are foolish enough to base our faith in God and his Book upon a literal acceptance of the story of Joshua's causing the sun, that is, the earth, to stand still, then all argument and evidence that this story is merely an ancient poem will shake our faith to its foundations.

A firm sense of proportion is the teacher's invaluable aid. He must learn to distinguish between essentials and incidentals. He must understand what he can well afford to let go and what he must defend at all hazards. He must not ride hobbies, either of conservatism or of radicalism, or he will assuredly tumble into the ditch. Believing firmly that all Scripture is inspired of God and profitable, he will hold that belief not as an iron armor but as a workman's blouse. To him the Bible will be, not a dead, paved street, but a ploughed field, ever fertile for new harvests of thought and life. In that spirit, so far as his opportunity and ability permit, he will master the higher criticism. At any rate, he will not let it master him.

I should like to see our Sunday-school teachers every-

where forming classes in Christian evidences. Of course, the Bible should be known thoroughly, from cover to cover. No one can prove a sum till he has done it, and no one can prove a Bible of which he is ignorant.

I was told the other day of a class of young women within ten miles of Boston who, with their teacher, came recently to the serious conclusion that the ark of the tabernacle was a sort of photograph of Noah's ark which the children of Israel carried around with them. It may be imagined how luminous a discussion of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel could be carried on by such a class and teacher.

No; this study of Christian evidences presupposes a passable knowledge of the contents of the Bible. But if the study is earnestly followed, Bible knowledge will surprisingly develop with it.

These teachers' classes in Christian evidences should be built up around a text-book. If you want a small and attractive book, I know of nothing better than the "Short Manual of Christian Evidences," by Professor Fisher, of Yale University. It is published by Scribner's, and its price is seventy-five cents. I might name other books, but that would only confuse you needlessly.

A necessary element in such a study is the history of the manuscripts and of our English translations, a fascinating subject, to be pursued with the aid of such popular volumes as "The Parchments of the Faith," by Merrill, sold by the Baptist Publication Society for \$1.25, and "Our Sixty-Six Sacred Books," by Rice, sold by the American Sunday-School Union for from fifteen cents to half a dollar. After you have read such books, you

will almost invariably carry on the subject with the aid of more elaborate treatises.

My thought for these teachers' classes in Christian evidences is very simple. Every teacher should own the text-book, for later reference and for lending to his scholars, as well as for present use. All having read the chapter assigned, the teachers will come together to talk it over. The leader will have studied the same subject in some larger and fuller book. He will have written out a set of questions covering the assigned ground, and these are to be answered by the teachers. They will be so framed as to bring out discussion and perhaps excite debate. A brief essay on the subject will be read, at each meeting by a different teacher. The hour will close with the discussion of difficult points that have come up in recent lessons or are anticipated in the lessons to come.

In all this work the teachers should be encouraged to make **their own original contributions** to Christian evidences. One of them, for example, in reading the story of Samuel, has been struck with the account of the evil life of that good man's sons, and is impressed with the honesty of the Scriptures. Certainly a false historian would have made Samuel bring up his sons in godliness, and would have told how nobly they succeeded him and carried on his line. Such a bit of evidence is worth to its discoverer many pages from a book, and will be presented by him with peculiar force to others.

As to the aims of this study, they will be simple, and easily attained. There are certain points the Sunday-school teacher should know with all ardor of conviction.

They are these: God is. Christ lived in the flesh. The Bible is what it pretends to be. The truth of miracles, of the supernatural. The reality of immortality, of heaven, of hell. The fact of the atonement. The doctrines of the Trinity, of regeneration, of inspiration.

If the teacher is himself convinced, through and through, of those eight truths, and if he is able to convince others, meeting their arguments and resolving their doubts, his study of Christian evidences has received its practical crown. His Sunday-school work has become more of a science and less of a rhapsody. It has attained the businesslike methods of secular schools. It has reached the dignity of the law courts. It obtains the respect and admiration of young men. It binds the intellect to the heart and both to Christ. It not only wins souls, but it holds them after they are won.

And now perhaps I cannot close this chapter in a better way than by giving an illustration of just what I mean by the teaching of Christian evidences.

I will suppose that you are to teach a lesson that most teachers use annually, the Easter lesson, the resurrection of Christ. This lesson affords you an easy chance to exhort. You may indulge in word pictures of the scene. You may enter into a long description of Eastern tombs and Roman guards. You may drill into the class the precise order in which the women and the various disciples visited the tomb. You may warn your scholars of the certainty of death, and impress upon them the truth that Christ is the Resurrection and the Life. You may carry out this programme, through which that class has already passed perhaps a dozen times, and you will prob-

ably leave them with little firmer grasp on the great fact of the resurrection than they had before. "O, if I only *knew* that Christ rose from the dead! O, if I could only be *sure* that my dear one is still alive!" Who has not heard that cry many and many a time, as I have heard it, from those who have enjoyed all their lives the ministrations of the pulpit and the Sunday school?

Ah, teachers, when you next have a chance at that blessed Easter lesson, use it as your God-sent opportunity to banish such doubts forever! The proofs of Christ's resurrection are many, and varied, and irresistible. Point to the narratives themselves. Let the class read them aloud, noting how simple they are, how natural, how apparently honest and straightforward. Point out some of the seeming discrepancies, like the differences in the accounts regarding the arrival of the women. Show how these discrepancies may be explained, but at the same time remind the class that a fictitious narrative would have avoided discrepancies, especially those that lie so plainly on the surface. Contrast this simple, honest, convincing narrative with a false account of the same event, the product of later ages, the so-called Gospel of Peter. Read to the class this extract:—

"In the night before the Lord's Day, the soldiers being on guard two and two about, there arose a great voice in heaven; and they saw the heavens opened, and two men descending thence with great light and approaching the tomb. And that stone which had been placed at the door rolled away of itself to one side, and the tomb was laid open, and both the young men went in. On seeing this, the sentinels woke the centurion and

the elders (for they also were on the watch); and while they were relating what they had seen, they saw again coming out of the tomb three men, the two supporting the one, and, following them, a cross. And of the two the head reached the heaven, but that of him whom they led overpassed the heaven. And they heard a voice out of heaven saying, 'Hast thou preached obedience to them that sleep?' And from the cross came answer, 'Yes.'"

Now that is the way myths grow up, and that is the way they are written. The miraculous predominates. It is grotesque and exaggerated. It is miracle unrelated to character, unexplained by any of the necessities of the case. In the true account, on the contrary, the miraculous element is minimized; it is unforced; it springs simply and easily from the circumstances. It is inevitable.

Brooding over these veracious accounts, you will discover many internal evidences of their veracity. For example, the prominence given to women. While this is entirely in accord with the rest of the Gospels and with what we have come to look upon as natural and beautiful, what ancient writer, if he were manufacturing a narrative, or what ancient rumor, growing slowly to a myth, would have made a few weak women the discoverers and heralds of the resurrection? Would it not have been John, perhaps, to whom this honor would have been assigned, or Peter, or James? or would it not have been some superb, thunder-smitten delegation from the Sanhedrim? But, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene"—who would ever have thought of that?

Again, what false historian would have recorded the

incredulity of the disciples? "Some doubted," it is recorded in Matthew. "They believed not them which had seen him after he was risen," says Mark. The women's words seemed to the disciples "as idle tales," says Luke. Thomas was unbelieving, and the two of Emmaus had no hope.

Again, bid the class note the little details, such as none but eye-witnesses would recall or dream of writing,—the linen cloths lying, the folded napkin, the imagined gardener, John outrunning Peter, the table blessing at Emmaus, the broiled fish and honeycomb,—these are touches that need only to be pointed out to confirm the narrative wonderfully as natural and true.

Pass on to consider how many appearances of the risen Lord are recorded, and all as naturally. It is impossible to explain away so many independent events. Consider also the number of persons involved, as many as five hundred at one time. They could not all have been subject to hallucinations. Consider the sudden cessation of these appearances at the end of the forty days; whereas, if they had merely been the visions of dreamy zealots, they would have increased in number as the church grew. Consider the wonderful change produced in the apostles, raised in an hour from the sad depression caused by the crucifixion to an exalted enthusiasm that braved all dangers, sent them to proclaim the good news in the temple itself, and brought about Pentecost. Was this wrought by an empty dream of an unreal resurrection? Consider the most striking case of all, that lawyerlike Paul, transformed in an instant, at sight of the risen Christ, from a persecutor to an apostle. Remember how

he based his preaching upon the resurrection, and declared that if Christ were not raised, it was all vain. Remember that, in the confident faith inspired by the resurrection and by that alone, thousands upon thousands during the succeeding years gave that supreme evidence of belief, a martyr's death. Was Paul befooled? No keener man ever lived than he. Were the martyrs visionaries? Men do not lay down their lives for visions.

Suppose it is argued that Christ did not die, but merely swooned on the cross. What, then, became of him? When and where did he die? Could the disciples have hidden him? Would he for a minute have consented?

Suppose the enemies of Christ carried away his body, and thus the tomb was found empty. Why, then, did they not produce his body, and thus end the story of his resurrection?

Was it all a myth? There was no time for a myth to grow up. Was it a falsehood? The character of the disciples renders the thought impossible. By the record, tested in every part, and by the results, viewed under every light, the resurrection of Christ is one of the best attested facts of history.

Well, it is in about that fashion that I would ride my hobby horse, Proveit. And I contend that such a mode of teaching the Easter lesson would lead irresistibly to all the ethical conclusions obtainable from any other way of teaching, all the comfort, all the joy, all the adoration, and would establish them upon foundations that cannot be shaken by the shock of death.

Oh, to be sure of one's religion! What a strength it

is! Not to hold one's faith tentatively, at the mercy of a skeptic's sneer. Not to falter before the pompous emptiness of infidel fallacies. Not to faint under the test of sorrow or gloom or mortal extremity. To have done with doubt, once and forever. To know, and know that you know. To be able to build on firm foundations, immutable and eternal as truth itself. All this is the privilege and therefore the duty of every Christian; to be led into it is the right of every Sunday-school scholar. May he who became the Word, the incarnate Reason of Jehovah, guide us and enable us to guide our classes to the reason and the proof of his gospel!

CHAPTER XXIV

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

AM I wrong in thinking that I see a gradual drawing away from Christmas celebrations in the Sunday school? I hope I am. Teachers and officers, however, are very likely to shrink from the labor involved, to remember past turmoils, and to devise some makeshift of a celebration that is no pride to themselves or satisfaction to the children.

For the children, bless them! are not weary of these things. The glittering tree and the jovial Santa still fascinate them as they fascinated my own well-remembered boyhood, when they formed the sparkling cynosure of the entire year. And it seems a pity, since so much pleasure can be given so easily to so many, to minimize it or do away with it altogether.

Simple Celebrations.—I say “so easily,” though I am well aware that the adverb will arouse sarcastic smiles. But I believe we make far too much fuss over our Christmas rejoicings, losing in multiplicity of parade the beautiful, simple lesson of the Advent. An ideal Christmas celebration may be purchased at little cost of money, time, or strength. No one person, and no few persons, should be allowed to bear the burden of it, but it should be divided among many. Where the Sunday school is small, by all means neighboring schools or the

schools of the entire town should unite for the festival, and thus put in practice, that evening at least, one of the chief teachings of Christmas. Divide the work among many committees, each with a responsible head. Let one group plan the decorations, let a committee obtain the evergreen boughs, another fashion the wreaths, another put them in place. Set a committee to arrange the singing. Set another committee over the ushering. The tree, the exercise, the presents,—divide the work into little parcels, and then no back will break. Besides, far more good will be gained if many are thus interested in the celebration than if only a few receive the rewards of service. And if any superintendent says it is easier to do the thing himself than to superintend so many, ask him the meaning of the name of his office.

In this committee work utilize as far as possible the young folks themselves. They will enjoy it, and their loyalty to the school will be increased by it. Their interest in the celebration will be proprietary. Utilize also the skilled force of the young people's society. They will feel complimented, and the service will bind the two organizations more firmly together.

Overcrowded Programmes.—The matter of time will do much to decide whether the celebration is dreaded, or anticipated with pleasure. Most of such festivals are sadly overcrowded. Time carefully each exercise, making generous allowance for "getting up and sitting down," for coming in and going out, and for the unexpected hitches that are sure to come. Leave liberal gaps, as men leave gaps between connecting railroad rails, because "heat expands." Rehearse everything,

and "get a good ready." Insist on promptness. Set the hour early, and let people know you will begin at the hour, though only ten are there. Then, keep your word. Close early, before the fidgets come. "Early beginning and early to close, and oh, how successfully everything goes!"

Our Christmas celebration should be, as far as possible, a re-embodiment of the Advent Day itself. There are four simple elements of that great event, and if we introduce those four elements into our Christmas exercises, they will be well-rounded, attractive, and fruitful. There is:—

First, upward; the thought of the star; the element of worship.

Second, downward; the angels' song of good will; the element of charity.

Third, inward; the manger and its blessedness; the element of rejoicing.

Fourth, outward; the magi and their offerings; the element of gifts.

1. Upward.—Who has not attended Christmas festivals that might as well have been festivals in honor of Mercury or Juno? The real thought of Christmas has scarcely entered at all into the celebration. I have seen an evening's Christmas entertainment, in a Sunday school, that was based entirely on the brownies; another year, entirely on the characters of Mother Goose's melodies!

Now I believe that the Christmas concert should be a gain to the religious life of every participant and auditor. I would precede it, on Christmas morning, with an

early morning prayer meeting—a sunrise prayer meeting. Such a meeting has been held annually in my own church; it is very largely attended, by young and old, and scores take part. It gives a spiritual tone to the entire day. It is the best possible preparation for Christmas evening.

At the very outset of the evening's exercises, make plain the predominant purpose of the gathering,—that it is to exalt the Saviour of men. Get the most eloquent speaker obtainable to present the theme, briefly but most winsomely. And I would follow this with several short, simple prayers, in swift succession. One of these prayers may well be given in brief, easy sentences, or parts of sentences, which the children, even the youngest, will repeat after the speaker, all heads being bowed.

Having in some such ways as these gained the upward look, next make sure of:—

2. **Downward.**—I have known Sunday schools that gave up, by vote, their Christmas festivities, especially the gift part, in order to use the money for the pleasure and comfort of poor children. This spirit of self-denial can be cultivated in other ways, throughout the year, and in our well-to do Sunday schools it is not necessary to abandon the Sunday-school “treat” in order to get the element of charity into the celebration.

In some way, however, this element must be incorporated. Make a strong appeal to the parents. Ask them to give each child a chance to earn something to give to the poor at Christmas. Do not consider your festival in commemoration of the Christ-child a success unless each of his children has brought something of his own, though

only a stick of candy, to give away to Christ's other, less fortunate, children. And then let the scholars deliver these gifts in person, going about in groups under the conduct of their elders.

3. **Inward.**—Christmas affords an unexampled opportunity to exalt the church in the children's minds as the centre of joy, even of jollity. As I remember my own boyhood (and I'm a good deal of a boy still!), and as I watch other children, I conclude that the Christmas jollity centres in Santa and the tree. *Who* tires of the tree? *Who* wants to bring in the gifts in prosaic wicker baskets? Never the children. *Who* wearies of jovial St. Nicholas? The grown-ups that must wear the wig and furs and for one short evening unbend their precious dignity; not the children. Why, I saw once in a department store a "Santa Claus" writing in a book the Christmas wishes of the boys and girls as they came up and revealed them,—the surliest fellow, as to eyes, voice, and evident spirit, I ever saw, a fellow with no heart at all for his blessed task; and yet the dear children flocked around him like bees to a bunch of old-fashioned phlox. It must have been the long white beard.

Have a tree, if it is only a stick; have a Santa Claus, if *he* is only a stick. Get a Santa who will omit the cheap jokes and exalt Christ. But don't leave out the fun.

Much of this is true also of the Christmas "exercise," or "cantata," or "concert," or what you choose to call it. Circumstances differ so widely that I cannot name for you good exercises, though that would be a useful service. Your best plan is to send for samples galore, and

make your choice. You will have ample range. Santa has been exploited in every possible phase. They have even gone on to Mrs. Santa and Santa Junior, and Santa's sisters and cousins and aunts. A good exercise will introduce the element of surprise, it will *not* give the children much acting to do, it will be simple and memorable, and it will contribute unmistakably to the genuine Christmas spirit; it will exalt Christ. Sometimes you can get best results by using the best parts of more than one exercise.

Home-made Exercises.—It is not at all necessary always to send away for an exercise in order to have a thoroughly successful Christmas celebration. Make your own. Advertise it as an original exercise, and you will increase the interest considerably.

One home-made exercise might be called "**The Lighting of the Tree.**" The tree will be all ready for lighting, and will be in view as the audience gathers, but the lighting of each candle will come as a response to some appropriate Scripture verse repeated by a scholar, or some Christmas poem recited, or some Christmas song sung. Not until the last child has made his contribution will the tree shine out in its full beauty. Of course, the pastor will draw a little moral from this.

Another home-made exercise might be called "**Christmas Questions.**" It would consist merely of a series of questions and answers, the former propounded by the superintendent and the latter given by the children. Now a single child would reply, now a class in concert, now the whole school. Now the answer would come in the form of a Bible verse, now as a stanza of a hymn,

now as a poem recited, now as a bit of description read. As to the questions, they should cover the Christmas story, and whatever, growing out of it, the superintendent and teachers wish to bring in. For example, "Where was Jesus born?" would be answered, possibly, by the singing of Phillips Brooks's beautiful hymn, "O little town of Bethlehem." "What great men came to find the infant Jesus?" would be answered by the recitation of Longfellow's poem, "The Three Kings," and by an abstract of Henry Van Dyke's story, "The Other Wise Man." The plan gives unlimited range to the ingenuity and skill of whoever may prepare the exercise.

A variation of this exercise may consist of brief addresses (limited to three minutes) by different persons, each address to end in a question, and each question to be answered by a song. There may be a choir of children hidden behind a curtain, or two choirs thus hidden at the ends of the room, singing antiphonally. For example, after a brief description of the scene at Bethlehem when the angels sang, introduce the question, "What did they sing about?" which the children will answer by singing softly E. H. Sears's lovely hymn, "It came upon the midnight clear." After a little talk on the theme of the refusal to receive Mary at the inn, ask: "Would you treat the Lord Jesus in that way?" receiving as answer the song by Emily E. S. Elliott, whose refrain is, "O come to my heart, Lord Jesus; there's room in my heart for thee." This service might be named "The Answer of Song."

One more suggestion for a home-made exercise, this time a little more elaborate, may suffice. Call it "The

Building of the Cross." Make pasteboard cubes, quite large, say a foot each way. Cover them with white, and paint or draw on each an easily seen symbol of some conspicuous event in Christ's life. Sometimes an object fastened to the cube will serve for the illustration. Sometimes a picture can be cut from a paper or magazine. A star, for example, will represent the birth, a stone in the shape of a flat cake will stand for the temptation, a mountain scene will call to mind the transfiguration, and so on. These cubes are to be built up, on the platform, in the shape of a cross. Separate scholars will take them, and each, before depositing his cube, will state what it represents, and will recite some passage of Scripture, some poem, or some prose selection, appropriate to his subject. In this way perhaps twelve of the principal events in Christ's life will appear to be building up his cross. Arrange them chronologically, placing the star at the bottom, and at the summit a picture of clouds from which rays of golden glory are streaming, to represent the ascension. The side pieces must be added by means of hooks, and the first must be supported till its balancing piece is put in position.

4. **Outward.**—Just a word, in conclusion, as to the school "treat," the presents for the children. Probably every Sunday school has by this time seen the necessity of forbidding a general receipt and disbursement of gifts. Some parents are sure to take the opportunity for vulgar display. I have been present at Christmas entertainments when almost every alternate name called out belonged to a certain family, and their pew became filled with parcels almost to a level with its railing. The chil-

dren enjoy watching for their names to be called, and with a brisk Santa the operation need not be tedious; but it is a wise school that prevents heartburnings by ruling that, for the sake of the poorer children, each scholar shall receive no more than one gift, in addition to the school treat of candy, nuts, and fruit. And then, by shrewd management among the generous, see to it that not the poorest child fails to receive this second gift.

But cultivate at this season among the members of the church and school the lovely spirit of giving. Urge them to prepare gifts for others than relatives and nearest friends,—for the lonely, for the sick, for the ugly, for non-Christians, for those that do not expect it. Organize among the children an S. S. S.,—Santa's Secret Service. Arm this messenger corps with printed receipt-books, and be sure that each receipt, when signed, is returned to the giver; but provide for secrecy if the giver desires to remain unknown. This kindly mystery, this jolly unselfishness, is of the very heart of Christmas.

CHAPTER XXV

THE LESSON PERSPECTIVE

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL lesson taught out of perspective is very much like a drawing that is in the same predicament.

It is part of my business to criticize the drawings that are made for my paper, and once in a while I get from some young artist a decidedly novel effect. Here, for instance, will be a little girl looking out of a window, and two or three yards away sits an old man in a chair. He has suffered overmuch from the diminishing effect of perspective, and barely comes up to her knees. In another effort, only a brief reasoning suffices to convince the designer that his church spire is precisely the height of his front door. In still a third picture a box is so drawn as to become a flat surface, or a room is absolutely turned inside out.

Now the sense of proportion is one of the most important pedagogical virtues,—to know what to place in the foreground and what in the background, and what relation precisely the one should hold to the other.

Many teachers teach as a child draws—all on one plane. Every fact, every truth, is of equal importance. The exact position of Calvary, and the meaning of the crucifixion to the world; the probable size and material of the tables of stone, and the contents of the Decalogue; the way they reclined at table, and the spiritual signifi-

cance of the Last Supper—the first set of facts is in their teaching of equal weight with the second.

Such teachers exult in minute details—the weight of Goliath's armor, piece by piece; the appearance of the locusts eaten by John the Baptist; the kind of walls that Asa built. Or, perhaps, they are especially pleased with a certain thought, and elaborate it through fifteen verbose minutes, quite forgetting that it is far from the main thought of the lesson, and not a thought that will much help the scholars anyway. Other teachers are strong along a certain line, such as the succession of kings in Israel and Judah, and drill everlastingly upon that, heedless of what is probably best for their class. Still others are so immensely tickled with a story illustrating some side point in the lesson, or with a diagram or chart they have invented, that illustration or diagram become virtually the entire lesson to them and their luckless scholars.

A Well-made Plan.—Perspective in teaching a lesson, like perspective in a picture, comes only from a plan. However artistically careless and impromptu a good drawing may appear, trace it back and you will find it gridironed with formal squares. The artist decides at the outset what figures or objects shall stand in the foreground and what shall be relegated to the diminishing distance. If a cow is back in the meadow, supposedly an eighth of a mile away, no amount of interest in that cow will persuade the artist to magnify her size or increase the distinctness of her spots.

After the same workmanlike fashion, the true teacher decides at the outset of his studying just what is to be

the main point of his teaching. Sometimes it will be the history, when exegesis must take a back seat ; sometimes it will be the practical truth in the lesson, when the historical, geographical, or critical phases of the text must be passed over lightly.

Having decided on this central theme, the teacher's next task is no less important. Out of the multitude of subordinate topics which will crowd upon his ready mind he must rigorously select those that are most closely and naturally related to his main subject, those that will reinforce it and not submerge it.

The Central Point.—You want to leave upon your scholars' minds an impression of the lesson as a whole. Your scholars—unless they are the phenomena they are not likely to be—will not remember more than one point of the lesson definitely, and you are lucky if they remember that ; the rest will be a loose haze. It should be your sedulous care that the one thing they remember is the chief thing, and that the loose haze is made up of the subordinate things.

Pictures—to return to our useful illustration—are likely to be “spotty” ; to exhibit, that is, several centres of emphasis and interest, rather than one. The “composition,” as the artists say, is bad, and the picture is not a whole, as a landscape is, or a group in a room. The heroine may stand out finely, in bold relief against a dark background ; but over in the corner is some insignificant character who also is in bold relief against a dark background, while in the other corner the silhouette of some inconsequential chair divides the honors with the aforesaid two. The picture is “spotty.”

Contrast with this—to take a well-known example—Munkacsy's superb painting, "Christ before Pilate," or Hofmann's "The Boy Jesus in the Temple." Note how in both pictures all lines centre upon our Lord, all eyes are directed to him, all interest is subordinated to that imperial interest. The face of Pilate is itself a masterpiece. So is that fanatic Jew, who with uplifted arm is shouting, "Crucify him!" So are the faces of the sympathizing women. So are the bearded rabbis. But you recognize them in each case as accessories, after all, and you return again and again to the lovely face of the Wonderful Boy; the regal, worn face of the Man of Sorrows. By virtue of that dominating interest you feel the picture as a unity.

Knowing what to leave out is the art of art. It is the poet's skill, the novelist's, the orator's, the sculptor's; certainly it is the painter's. One is reminded of the story of Leonardo da Vinci, who introduced into the picture of "The Last Supper" a magnificent golden goblet. "That goblet," said a friend enthusiastically, "is by far the best thing in the picture; it is the chief triumph of your skill." Instantly Da Vinci dashed his loaded brush over the goblet and obliterated it. "Nothing," he exclaimed, "shall surpass the face of my Saviour."

In that anecdote lies the secret of proportion in teaching. It is interest that makes emphasis. If your interest is in some inferior truth, your emphasis will be upon it, whether you wish it or not. If your heart is fixed upon the great central verities of religion, you will allow no allurements of illustration or anecdote or historical lore to distract you or your scholars from them.

In teaching the story of the man let down through the roof of the house to Jesus' feet, if it is your heart's desire to send your scholars to the great Physician you will spend only enough time on the "mattress" and the "roof" to make the scene intelligible, and you will speed to the soul of the matter, the wonderful healing. In teaching Paul's last recorded journey to Jerusalem, if your heart is aflame with admiration for the apostle's steadfast pursuit of duty against whatever obstacles, and you are chiefly eager to incorporate that spirit in your scholars' minds, then you will dwell only long enough on the geography of Miletus, Tyre, Ptolemais, and the rest, only long enough on Philip's prophetic daughters and the quaint manner of Agabus's warning, to render vivid the number and variety of hindrances that beset Paul's determined will.

Do I seem, in insisting upon a single ineffaceable picture as adequate goal of an entire lesson, to be minimizing our Sunday-school design and effort? Think what it means to implant fifty-two such pictures, in the course of a year, in the mind of any person! What a gallery! What a glorious Louvre of galleries growing from year to year! Surely that, well done, is triumph sufficient, for time and eternity.

The Secret of Symmetry.—Dr. Moorehead, the beloved Bible-teacher, saw his little grandchild playing on the floor one day with a dissected map of the United States. The lassie was sorely puzzled. Things would not fit together. Here between Illinois and Iowa was an altogether impossible gap. Yonder was New Mexico thrust-

ing an elbow into Kansas. It was a disheartening jumble, and the girlie was almost in tears.

“Turn it over,” said Dr. Moorehead, “and work on the other side.”

There was a large face of George Washington on the other side, and that was easy. Two eyes—why, of course! And a nose,—right under the eyes, to be sure! And mouth, ears, square chin, cheeks,—George Washington was a rapid success, and the small worker was delighted.

“Now turn it over.”

A piece of cardboard slipped beneath helped to effect the revolution,—not the first one in which George Washington had been engaged,—and lo! the puzzling United States were all in decorous order, Kansas and Illinois, Iowa and New Mexico and the rest precisely where they ought to be.

And so, fellow teachers, if we want to bring into rememberable symmetry the perplexing, crowded facts and truths of these great lessons,—let us turn them over, and *work on the Man!*

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SUPERINTENDENT THAT NEEDS A MUZZLE

I HOPE my title will not seem harsh or disrespectful. It is the spirited dogs, you know, that need a muzzle,—dogs of the aggressive bark and the willing bite. There are curs, lank and listless, that would never be honored with a muzzle, even in a year of dog days.

The only trouble with my canine friend of the muzzle is that he has **misplaced his energy**. He has barked at the policeman instead of the tramp, and he has gnawed at my trousers instead of his own disinterred bones. Hence the muzzle.

Nothing more than this is the matter with our subject, the superintendent. When he stands before those wriggling youngsters and offers up a five-minute prayer, the deed is good but misplaced; the prayer belongs in the church prayer meeting. When he introduces the responsive Bible-reading with foregleams of the lesson, and closes it with a comprehensive summary, what he says is excellent but misplaced; it belongs in the teachers' meeting. When he holds the school for five minutes in order to apply the day's lesson to the scholars' lives, probably every word of his homily is true and good; but certainly every teacher before him, if she knows her business, has already said to her scholars all that needs to be said along that line.

But our over-energetic, or over-conscientious, or (shall I whisper it?) our egotistical superintendent cannot give out a notice without enlarging every detail, cannot announce a song without directing attention to its sentiment, cannot shake his finger at an unruly scholar without making him the text for a discourse on order, cannot allow the secretary's report to go without an afterclap of tedious encouragement or reproof.

The Superintending Superintendent.—Far from him is the conception of the superintendent as an all-but-silent governor of the school, an officer whose appearance on the platform or whose raised hand is the signal for an instant hush, whose nod to the chorister or secretary is their sufficient introduction, whose purpose is to say and do as little as he can and get others to say and do as much as possible, and whose central ambition is to deliver the school to the teachers precisely at the proper minute and precisely in the proper condition of reverent attention. This conception of his work is quite foreign to the superintendent that needs a muzzle.

His Share.—He has not an algebraic mind. If he had, he would argue: As I, John Smith, am to these twenty teachers and one hundred and twenty scholars, so is the time I ought to take for talking to the time I ought to leave for them. He would calculate about as follows:—

<i>Songs, 3 at 3 min. ea.</i>	9
<i>Prayer</i>	2
<i>Bible-reading</i>	3
<i>Announcements</i>	2
<i>Unforeseen extras</i>	4

<i>Getting settled in classes after opening exercises . . .</i>	5
<i>Collection, filling out records, distributing papers and books</i>	5
<i>Teaching the lessons</i>	30
	<hr/>
<i>Total, minutes</i>	60
<i>Time left for the superintendent's homily</i>	?

But his mind is poetic, oratorical, imaginative, anything but algebraic or arithmetical; therefore he must have a muzzle. The questions are: what sort of muzzle? and how shall it be applied?

Perhaps he may read this chapter, and *it* may serve as a muzzle. If, however, he is so unfortunate as not to have a copy of this book, I do not see that you can do much without a teachers' meeting. It is through the teachers' meeting that all Sunday-school reforms are to be effected, and that is not the least of its advantages.

Putting On the Muzzle.—For at the teachers' meeting you will insist upon setting aside the first fifteen minutes for a discussion of the general interests of the school. And in this discussion it will not be long before some teacher will pipe up: "Mr. Superintendent, I *must have* half an hour for the lesson; how can I get it?" And the muzzle will thereupon be produced from its brown-paper wrapping.

Mr. Garland will say, "That is my great need, too; last Sunday we actually had only seventeen minutes." *Miss Payson*: "Where *does* all the time go to?" *Professor Richardson*: "Shouldn't we establish a rule always to begin the teaching at a certain minute?" *Omnes*: "Yes. That's just it. At a certain minute."

SUPERINTENDENT: "Certainly. Why not? A very sensible suggestion. What do you say to 12:25?"

And the muzzle is on.

Keeping the Muzzle On.—Of course, it is going to slip off, if you don't watch. You will be obliged to draw in a strap here and tighten a buckle there. You may be compelled to go into details, at your teachers' meeting, much as in the tabular exhibit I have just made. The chorister may have to insist on his three songs, with no stanzas clipped. The secretary may have to insist on a regular and adequate time for his announcements. You may have to report the complaints of parents when the school is not dismissed on time. Again and again you may be forced to plead for your half hour for the lesson. Vigilance is the price of more things than liberty.

But do not, for the lack of a little plain and courageous speaking, allow a good superintendent to spoil himself and the school. Know precisely what you want of him, tell precisely what you want of him, and then if he gets mad you will not want anything more of him at all. But he won't get mad.

Is the muzzle to be complete? May not the superintendent talk at all? Of course he may, but always in strict proportion

1. To his *ability*.
2. To the *need*.
3. To the *opportunity*.

1. Some superintendents are skilled in blackboard work, and by a few turns with the chalk can make a les-

son luminous, and start scholars and teachers finely upon the topic of the hour. Others are good at object talks. Others know just how to give the needed word of encouragement and good cheer. It would be a sin to muzzle absolutely a dog that can do such tricks as these.

2. Only, let nothing be done merely to show off the skill. Carefully let the superintendent and teachers consider the proposed contribution to the school hour, and use it only in case it meets "a felt need."

3. And not even then, unless it can come into the time I have set apart in my table for "extras," or for getting to classes, and the like. The time for singing, Bible, prayer, and teaching is not too long by a second, and those four items are more important than anything the brightest superintendent is likely to say.

I am truly sorry for the superintendent that needs a muzzle. It is hard to suppress ideas that are eager for utterance, "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." But, for the good of the school and the cause of Christ, let the muzzle be gracefully assumed and heroically worn. Ere long—trust me—will come a beautiful transformation. The muzzle will be sublimed, will be elevated, will become a ring of light, and will shine above the superintendent's head as a martyr's aureole!

CHAPTER XXVII

“PEARLS BEFORE SWINE”

MANY more teachers than would care to acknowledge it have the “pearls before swine” feeling. That is, when they are urged to lavish themselves upon their classes, to study long, to think hard, to plan like statesmen and teach with the zeal of jury lawyers, they begin to object: “It would be a waste of effort. The scholars would not appreciate it. They are too young, too careless, too (*in a whisper*) stupid. It would be casting pearls before swine.”

Not that any teacher would in so many words call his own best thoughts “pearls” and his scholars “swine,” but—some things *are* too good for them. “You can carry a thing too far, you understand.”

No, no, no! Nothing can be too good for your scholars. No teaching can be too wise, too true, too loving, too helpful. Since the days of Robert Raikes, no Sunday-school lesson was ever taught too well.

On the contrary, it is the teacher’s failure to pour out his best that has caused the failure of every class that ever failed. Only as we recognize the truth that this Sunday-school task is the noblest ever given workman to accomplish, the most difficult, the most glorious, rightfully demanding our utmost resources, can we succeed in it and enjoy it.

To be sure, there may be too much preparation of a certain sort: Miss Crayon gets an idea for a pretty blackboard design, and she spends so much time in preparing it that she can bring her class only the haziest knowledge of the lesson story, quite lost in a rainbow mist of hearts and arrows and chains and initials off on a lark.

Dr. Cannon loads up for his class of restless boys with a big charge of historical facts, the entire history of the house of Herods, and quite forgets to consider a single point in which the lesson might hit their lives.

Young Mr. Shiner revels in anecdotes and brilliant illustrations. His study for Sunday-school consists in collecting a great variety of these, a variety so great that they mutually obliterate one another and transform the lesson into a *Foster's Cyclopaedia*.

Dear Mrs. Grind plods painfully through half a dozen commentaries, taking copious notes from each, and leaves herself no time to arrange her stores of information, assimilate them, and prepare them for introduction into other heads.

Now all of these typical cases might be described not as too much pearl but as too much oyster. The pearl, if there is any, is lost, smothered. There cannot be too good preparation for teaching that Sunday-school lesson; but to be good preparation it must be well balanced. It must shape itself into sensible, natural questions. It must leave room for—indeed, it must include—visiting the scholars, writing letters to them, learning the lives to which you are to minister. Yes, and it must not be so arduous preparation as to forfeit that buoyancy of

body and freshness of mind in which alone the teaching can be vigorous, attractive, and fruitful.

Unsuited to the Scholars.—There is something else which is sometimes called throwing pearls before swine,—the use in teaching of what is good in itself, and, very likely, of a sort that is needed in the balance of the lesson, but it is not suited to the age or circumstances of the scholars.

For instance, before a class of children coming from ignorant homes, the teacher uses an illustration from the Sistine Madonna; no photograph, you understand; nothing but Mrs. Jameson. Now that was no casting of pearls before swine; it was not a pearl at all, but a ball of clumsy clay. The pearl might have been an illustration taken from a tulip, or a robin, or a chestnut-tree.

It is well that sometime the scholars should know something about the principal theories of inspiration, but that, good in itself, is anything but good for a class of fidgety boys. It is well that sometime the scholars should know the value of a denarius, but in the primary department you would better call it a penny. The teacher should know these things, but to tell them to the children before they are ready to remember them is a waste of precious opportunity. One of the gardener's hardest tasks is to thin out the flowers, throwing away pansies and portulacas just because there is no room for them to grow without spoiling other pansies and portulacas. Precisely this bit of resignation every teacher must undertake in the interest of his class, mercilessly casting out of his presentation of the lesson

every illustration that will clog, every fact that will confuse, and every teaching that does not fit their lives.

Ah, you teachers who may have thought it possible in your class to “cast pearls before swine,” build up your lesson like a pearl! Pearl-fashion, seek first for a nucleus, a strong central truth, and let your thoughts all grow to that. Then, as the oyster sucks in the seawater, great gulps of it, so do you read widely and study much. As the oyster draws from the waves for its pearl nothing but their lime, not even the gold that is in them, so do you draw from all this flood of material only what fits yourself and your class. And then brood over it. Enwrap it in many folds, as the oyster wraps the growing pearl. Put in the colors, the anecdotes and illustrations, so that it will shine and attract. Roll it over and over in your mind, until you can present it with no roughnesses, well rounded and perfect. Meditate over it, brood it.

And then, all being ready, and the day of days having come, a pearl before God’s little ones! Though it is only a seed pearl, lay it before them with joy, proud and happy that it may shine upon their life garments. Sometime, in the city whose gates are pearl, you will see what such patient, wise, and loving work has been doing for yourself, that it has been fashioning gems for an unseen crown, a crown that will flash out glorious to men and angels in the day when God makes up his jewels.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CLASS NUCLEUS

THE importance of this subject warrants setting it apart in a separate chapter, even though the chapter must be very brief.

No Sunday-school teacher has a right to be discouraged whose class contains a nucleus. By a nucleus, I mean the portion of the class that attends regularly, and studies the lessons at home. This nucleus may consist of only one scholar, but, as long as he has it, the teacher should be of good hope.

All growth, all life, is built up around nuclei. Given a nucleus, nature can make an oak, a bird, a man. Certainly, given a nucleus, any teacher can make a successful class.

The trouble usually is that he does not know how to use his nucleus, how to make it a live, attractive nucleus, how to organize his teaching around it. For a nucleus is a harm, rather than a help, if the teacher works for it, and does not teach it to work for the other scholars. All his plans must be based on the nucleus, and it is a great temptation to stop there,—that is, to devote himself wholly to the brighter and more faithful scholars. He will fail if he does. A nucleus is not a nucleus unless it is enlarging.

First, Recognize Your Nucleus.—This is especially im-

portant in the adult classes, which always contain so many that come as mere auditors, and will not come otherwise. They refuse to be questioned, and they contribute nothing to the discussions. Out of deference to this large element, the teachers of many adult classes never address the members of the class by name, but project their questions blankly, and usually with blank returns.

Now in all such classes a nucleus should quietly be formed. The teacher should go to each scholar, and ask, "Are you willing that I should question you by name?" It should be understood that no one will thus be questioned that has not given express permission, and each newcomer might be notified of the fact. Then the teacher should persistently and tactfully work to enlarge this inner circle.

Especially in classes of children, the nucleus may be set to work helping the other scholars into more active interest. The wise teacher will do nothing himself that he can get the nucleus to do for him. Every scholar that can be made such he will install as an assistant teacher. If he can do it wisely, without arousing vanity, he will tell such scholars what he expects from them, and how much depends on them. He will set his class to studying together in their homes, two by two, a brighter scholar—a member of the nucleus—with one that is duller or more careless. He will get these brighter scholars to write little essays on topics connected with the lessons, prepare sets of questions for propounding to the class, put diagrams on the blackboard, hunt up passages in commentaries illuminating the lesson. In plan-

ning—far ahead—for every lesson, he will plan how to get his scholars to help him teach that lesson.

This is not easy. No work of creation is easy. It requires less skill to pile up a million bricks than to make of one of them a purposeful, organizing life-centre. But the true teacher is not seeking dead bulk ; he is seeking life.

CHAPTER XXIX

WHAT TO DO WITH "THE HIGHER CRITICISM"

A Modern Parable.—They were rearing a beautiful building. The architect's plans called for a structure of magnificent proportions, massive in bulk yet delicate and graceful in outline. It was to stand for time and eternity.

For a tedious while the preparations had been making. There was a large excavation, waiting for the foundation, and great heaps of stone and wood lay ready for mason and carpenter. At last, one lovely spring day, the derricks all in place, the mortar mixed, the workmen singing with a zest, they began to lay the foundations with ponderous blocks of limestone.

Then strolled along three young gentlemen, all with lofty foreheads, all with supremely self-satisfied air, and all with spectacles.

"Hold!" they cried, simultaneously, to the laborers. "Don't lower that block till we determine its geological age."

The puzzled workmen, confused, obeyed the authoritative mandate.

Thereupon the young gentlemen with the spectacles gathered around the stone as it swung from the derrick, and began to chip pieces from it.

“Observe this trilobite,” said one, proudly exhibiting the fossil. “It is a Silurian trilobite,—Upper Silurian.” And he reeled off a Latin name as long as his nose.

“I am sorry to differ,” remarked another, cracking off a large piece from a corner, “but this brachiopod is certainly Devonian. Observe it.” And the Latin name he gave his fossil was as long as his face.

“Gentlemen,” said the third young man, viewing a bit of the limestone through a pocket microscope, “I grieve to note your errors, but you have failed to take into account these traces of organic remains, certainly ferns of a well-marked variety.” And he introduced a Latin name as long as a yardstick. “This limestone is manifestly of the Carboniferous age.”

“But,” said the first, “it must be Upper Silurian, because ——”

“Nonsense!” exclaimed the second simultaneously, “it must be Devonian, as any fool can see, because ——”

Thus they continued, with great vehemence, the Latin names growing longer and longer, and the stone growing smaller and smaller as they chipped away at it. In the meantime, the dismayed and puzzled workmen looked on with open mouths, and as for the building, it was at a standstill.

At last the contractor himself came bustling up.

“What’s all this?” he cried indignantly. “Who are you three fellows? and what do you mean by cutting that stone to pieces?”

“We are professors of geology,” they complacently explained. “We are possessed of scientific minds. These ignorant workmen were about to lay a foundation com-

posed of limestone whose age had not been determined. Such an unscientific procedure is at variance with the spirit of the times. It was of the utmost importance to determine the period to which the block must be referred, and happily we have discovered that it is—Upper Silurian," said the first; "Devonian," said the second; "Carboniferous," said the third. Then they went at it again.

But the contractor was a plain, blunt man. "You meddlesome braggarts," he cried, "get out of the way of my derrick! Leave my stone alone! It's good foundation stone, and that's all I want to know."

"But don't be so hasty, my friend," softly said the first professor. "Some Upper Silurian is ill-suited to your purpose. Only certain portions are adapted to foundations. Just wait a while, till I have made a thorough examination, and I can tell you whether, for instance, this is the famous Niagara limestone, and possessed of hydraulic properties."

"How can it be," interposed the second professor, "since it is manifestly Devonian? This brachiopod——"

"O fie!" interrupted the third professor; "this is absurd, for any tyro in geology can see that it is Carboniferous. These organic remains——"

And they went at it again as hard as ever, chipping away on the block.

The contractor's patience was exhausted. "Clear out!" he shouted, inelegantly, and fell to belaboring the professors with his walking stick.

Thereupon the three beat a hasty retreat, their eyes

shining with delight. "Now we shall be famous," said they. "Now we shall get big salaries, and be asked to give lecture courses around the country, for we have become scientific martyrs."

But the workmen proceeded to erect the building.

The Parable Applied.—And now surely no one of my readers needs an unfolding of my parable. We believe, all of us, that the Bible is the best foundation stone for a young life; nay, the best quarry of foundation stones. Our belief rests not on our own inadequate opinion, but on the uniform experience of centuries, the triumphant testimony of all biography. We know beyond a peradventure that the men and women whose minds were filled with the Bible in their youth, are those that have built upon that basis the most noble and enduring structures of character and accomplishment. We have found good foundation stone in all parts of this Bible quarry. Some of the blocks sparkle with crystals while others are plain; some are flinty while others are pure limestone; but all are solid, substantial blocks, good for the loftiest building that can be erected upon them, and for as long a time as the building will endure.

Knowing this, and being eager to lay the foundations, since lives are building ceaselessly and will not wait for us, but will build on the sand if we do not lay the firm foundations,—this being the case, can any one wonder that we grow impatient with these endless debates as to the age of this or that portion of our Bible quarry, the way in which such and such strata were laid down, whether by one sea or two or many successive seas, and that we are sometimes gruff and perhaps un-

mannerly in bidding the disputants step aside and let us do our work?

Not that for a moment any one of us would wish to teach the young an untruth, about the Bible or anything else. Surely, if any one has a right to the truth, it is an awakening intelligence, first looking out upon our complex and difficult life. I can conceive no blacker treason to God and man than to teach a child a lie.

But, even granting that these theories of the destructive critics of the Bible are true, it does not follow that they should be laid before the young. What would have been the result had the boy Gladstone been given to study a Polychrome Homer? When Edward Everett Hale, the brilliant lad, lay out on the ridgepole of his father's house and translated six books of Virgil's *Æneid* in the three hours of one afternoon, what would have been the result if he had had to take cognizance of the variant readings? Suppose Charles Lamb, on his first acquaintance with the Shakespeare he came to love so ardently, had been confronted with a zealous and crafty advocate of the Baconian theory; should we ever have had the "Tales from Shakespeare"? We talk much of pedagogy. It is the most vicious of pedagogy to invert the order of nature, to place the analytical before the synthetical, to generalize before we particularize, to discuss geologic eras before the pupil knows limestone from granite.

The wise teacher in the grammar school does not debate the theories of evolution, but he sets his scholars to hunting for snails, and noting how they move, and how their shell grows, and how they work their strap-like

tongue. He does not teach them the nebular hypothesis, but bids them observe the moon, and look for Jupiter's satellites through an opera glass. He gives them no lessons in the calculus, nor speculates concerning the fourth dimension, but grounds them in the multiplication table and in long division. His classes do not study comparative philology, but they build simple English sentences; nor do they bother their heads with diatoms, but learn to tell petals from sepals. So in our Sunday schools the wise teacher will not discuss theories of inspiration, or dates of composition, or unity of authorship, or authenticity of manuscripts, but he will teach the ten commandments and the eight beatitudes, illustrating them by the lives of all the heroes and renegades, the saints and sinners, from Adam in Eden to John in Patmos.

When one speaks in this way, one is very likely to be misunderstood. Let me repeat. No one wants the young taught anything that is not true. It would be a sin knowingly to teach a child anything that he must unlearn in later years. That process of unlearning is the most dangerous of processes. It is building a house on a rotten foundation, and being compelled to move it bodily to another foundation, or to lift it and put another foundation below. The process is long and costly. Moreover, it is certain to rack the house.

But if a child is not to be taught untruths, neither is he to be taught guesses at truth. He is to be taught nothing that must be taught apologetically, shrinkingly, as if afraid. We must teach new truth, if we teach it at all, with boldness and enthusiasm. If, for example, we consider the theory of a second Isaiah to be proved, we

must not talk about it with regret or even cautiously and defensively, but with exultant delight in the addition of a splendid new prophet to the long line of men of God. We have no loss in Messianic prophecy, but rather a sublime and unexpected gain. So will it be with any Bible discovery when it is actually proved. It will manifest its divine origin by confirming our faith rather than weakening it, and increasing rather than diminishing our zeal for Holy Writ. Until a theory or an assumed discovery can be taught in that spirit to young people, it should not be taught to them at all.

The young, we must remember, have no skeptical tendencies. They do not naturally test and discriminate, but believe. To lay before them different theories and bid them weigh and select, is only to confuse and perplex them. Careful, courageous, independent examination of truth is an ability they win only later, through long processes of education. What is doubtful and debatable has no fit place in a child's curriculum,—only what is sure.

This is not to say that the young cannot see fallacies. Their minds are frank and honest, and instinctively abhor the disingenuous. If some of the modern theories of the Bible are true, the books to which those theories apply have no proper place in our Sunday schools. If, for example, we are to believe that the writers, or, if you prefer, the compilers, of the books of Samuel and the Chronicles deliberately falsified the record, and, to gain their ends, whether to exalt the priesthood or what not, wrested the facts from their true setting, modified this, enlarged upon that, imagined the other, omitted here and inserted there,—if we are to believe this falsification of

history to serve the purposes of party, then let us keep such literature from the eyes of children. Explain as you please, you can never persuade boys and girls that motives that would be dishonorable in writers to-day were any less dishonorable twenty-five centuries ago. Their pure minds cannot be made to admire what is tricky and false. Tell them—and it will be true—that it is from the Bible that we gain all our ideals of inflexible integrity, and they will ask in their hearts, if not in words, “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?” If such scholars are right as those that wrote the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, if the Bible is a farrago of myths and misrepresentations, we have no further use for Bible schools; we might far better set our children to studying Socrates in the past and Emerson and Tolstoi in the present. At least so far as the young are concerned there is no midway course; it is either the rejection of such theories with horror, or the rejection of the Bible as a guide for the young along ways of uprightness and truth.

This is an age of cynicism. We need to teach the young the blessed power of faith. Trust men, trust yourself, trust your God,—hardly could three more valuable lessons be inculcated. But what message for an age of cynicism has this contemptuous criticism, that does not hesitate to ascribe to the authors of Scripture motives that would forever dishonor a modern gentleman? Those that are taught in such a school might well carry forth the blasting maxim, “Every man has his price.”

And not only is this an age of cynicism; it is an age of materialism, of bowing before the seen. Against this

our religious education must arm the young, if they are to be armed against it at all. It is the chief count against the destructive critics of the Bible that they are either open or secret disbelievers in the supernatural. At every turn they minimize it. That a passage in Scripture reports a miracle or tends to substantiate one, is to their minds conclusive evidence against its genuineness.

Now the young have no difficulty with miracles and other manifestations of the supernatural. They see the reasonableness of the supernatural. They are not yet sense-bound. Miracles appeal, not to their love of the marvelous, but to their fresh and untrammelled instincts, free thus far from the yoke of the visible universe. The Bible is the book of the young and of the old because it reveals most clearly the unseen world to which young and old are nearest. Too soon the yoke of dollars will press upon our children's necks. Let us teach them to throw it off, and gaze straight up into heaven. One thing, one thing above all others I would have a child of mine taught, and that is the vivid reality of the supernatural, the certainty of the spiritual world, so that he shall be more conscious of God's eye than of any human countenance, more sure of God's leading than of any human opinion. I would rather my child should be a believer in special providences than in the Pythagorean theorem. That my child's life should be interwoven with the supernatural will be of infinitely greater advantage, mental and practical, than a knowledge of history and science and art.

Many modern tendencies in the Sunday schools contra-

vene all this. Men are talking about Sunday-school lessons as if the teaching of conduct, the making of Christians, were secondary, while the prime purpose should be a mastery of Hebrew history and literature. I am ready to be counted an old fogy. I am ready to admit my belief that if you eliminate from Hebrew history the story of the Cross, as the vitalizing nerve of it all, our scholars would get more good from a history of America; if your study of Hebrew literature is only a simplified edition of the International Critical Commentary, if it is to be studied apart from the life and not as our only and adequate rule of faith and conduct, then I think our Sunday schools would better turn to English literature.

What the young need most is trust to conquer cynicism, the spiritual and unseen to conquer materialism, Calvary to conquer Vanity Fair. In these three things their safety consists, and not in any furbishing of the intellect with strophes and antistrophes, priestly code or Maccabean era.

What shall be our Bible-teaching, that these strong ends shall be gained from It? What Bible-teaching is safe for the young, and will give their lives a safe foundation? It will have six elements.

First, *Bible history*, but Bible history taught for the purpose of showing God's clear leading in the history, and therefore, less evidently but no less really, in all history. It is this great and constant purpose that should characterize all our teaching of Bible history in the Sunday school.

Second, *Bible literature*, but Bible literature taught as God's words to men, his authentic message, the fountain

and test therefore of all other literature, in beauty, variety, and worldwide, perennial power. All lesser teaching of Bible literature is like using gold to paint a barn.

Third, *Bible ethics*, but as the source, the authoritative source of our human laws, as the one sufficient guide of human life. To teach it as we would teach the ethics of Plato is to place modern London on the level of modern Athens.

Fourth, *Bible revelation*, the teachings of the Bible about hidden things, about immortality, heaven, and hell, about the nature of God, about conscience, sin, penalty, conversion, regeneration, sanctification, inspiration. These great truths should be taught as coincident with reason and approved by experience, but yet as issuing from the very mind of God, who alone could conceive them and reveal them to us.

Fifth, *Christ*, the climax and sum of revelation, his character, in all its appealing grace, its convincing majesty, the one enfolding miracle of all miracles.

And sixth, *the history of the Book*, how it was made, its unity, the impossibility that such men as its writers and such circumstances as surrounded its production could have yielded such a book unaided by the controlling will and immediate guidance of God such as no other book has had; and then its transmission, the wonderful story of the manuscripts, of the Vatican, of Sinai, of Egyptian sands and Babylonian hills, the translations and versions, the martyrs, the Wycliffes and Tyndales; and finally the Bible at work in the modern world, the marvels of missions, and the vast and beneficent civiliza-

tions built upon the Book,—a structure such as only the Immutable Rock of Holy Scripture could sustain.

Ah, let us teach our children these six things before we trouble them with the question of two Isaiahs or the date of Deuteronomy! And what I say of children I say also of those childlike, undeveloped minds found, often preponderatingly, in all congregations. Too much preaching is for the handful of scholars that may be in the church. For their sake topics are treated that do not shake their well-founded faith, but for the large majority send the entire fabric of religion tumbling down. An iconoclastic impression is given rather than an edifying one. We need a sense of proportion. We need to learn how ignorant of the Bible the masses really are, how poorly founded in their faith, and we need to set to work on fundamentals.

I long to see more teaching of Christian evidences, more proofs in sermons and Sunday schools. Not proof texts, observe, but proofs of proof texts. The world, young and old, can readily spare a recital of what we do not believe; they need to be told what we do believe, and to be made to believe it. It would be a vast gain, for instance, if our ministers would take half the meeting hour of their young people's societies for definite instruction in Christian evidences, with such a text-book as Robinson's or Fisher's. If there are doubts, the young should be shielded from them. If there are realities, confidence, conviction, the young have a right to them. So far from being introduced to infidelities, unconsciously to themselves they should be armed against them. The foundations of our holy faith should be laid in their young lives

so securely that no assault of the devil should in later years batter them down.

The walls of the New Jerusalem, that John saw in his vision,—I think of them as still a-building, and as made of the Christ-inspired deeds of men. Course upon course they rise into the celestial azure, sapphire and jasper, emerald and chrysoprase, the enduring counterpart of lives lived rightly here on earth. Some day they will descend out of heaven, all these heaped-up stores of divine grace and human obedience, and will surround and capture and transform till we shall have a new earth after the pattern of heaven. In that day we shall see, I think, that of all the fair blocks laid in the celestial walls none are fairer, none more resplendent with enduring lustre, than those that mean the teaching of God's truth to the children. If we would have a share in that divine up-building, we must teach as God's wisdom teaches us, our work must be without the flaws of pride and presumption, the fool's gold of worldly vanities. With the humble heart of a child we must seek what God would have us teach the children, and he who hides himself from the wise and prudent but reveals himself to babes will graciously guide us into all truth.

CHAPTER XXX

THAT EASILY POSSIBLE TEACHERS'-MEETING

NOT everywhere is it possible to form a normal class in which teachers shall be taught, but it is possible everywhere to hold a teachers'-meeting in which teachers shall confer. Nor even when, from geographical limitations, the teachers cannot actually meet, would I grant the impossibility of a teachers'-meeting, since a "round robin" could be passed from one to another, each relating in writing his perplexities and successes, and commenting on the letters that have preceded.

The teachers'-meeting is a sort of Sunday-school stock exchange, to which every teacher contributes what he knows about the school, the lesson, and how to teach it, and from which he goes enriched by all that the others know. For its leader there is needed, not a superlative teacher, but a good executive, able to draw from each, in an orderly and attractive way, whatever he can contribute to the aid of all.

If this simple ideal were kept before us, more teachers'-meetings would be undertaken and fewer would be abandoned. The trouble generally is that the teachers'-meeting is conducted by some teacher of an adult class, and *as* an adult class. It is forgotten that the majority of teachers are teachers of children, and the children's needs are ignored. The meeting is too old; no wonder it dies.

“As iron sharpeneth iron, so man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Though all the teachers are commonplace, that need not prevent their helping one another; and those that avail themselves of others' help do not long remain commonplace. If you think yourself unable in the least to inform or inspire your fellow-teachers, you think too lowly of yourself. If you think you do not need the help of even the least of them, you think too highly of yourself.

One of the most valuable kinds of teachers'-meeting requires from the teachers no originality whatever, merely wise selection. Simply let the teachers conspire together to own as great a variety of teachers' helps as possible,—Peloubet's, Hurlbut's, Monday Club, the rest of the annuals; Westminster, Pilgrim, Journal, Baptist Teacher, the rest of the monthlies; The Sunday School Times, International Evangel, English Sunday School Chronicle, the rest of the weeklies,—and let each bring to the lesson discussion the best plan and brightest thought from his own book or periodical. Then add, for the teacher's art and the general conduct of the school, such books as Dr. Trumbull's wise “Teaching and Teachers,” a chapter a night, with free comments. What school would not be blessed by a teachers'-meeting like this, so easily possible?

Many teachers'-meetings come to be abandoned because they are one-man meetings, and when the one man yields to nervous prostration, they also die. Now there are a number of ways of dividing the work required by a teachers'-meeting. One is, to make each teacher in turn responsible for the conduct of a meeting, with liberty to

get his work done for him, if he can, by some skilled teacher from a distance.

An excellent method is to persuade each teacher to adopt a specialty. Mr. Cadwallader may decide to become local authority on Hebrew customs. Miss Benthorp may take up the work of collecting attractive and telling anecdotes and illustrations. Mrs. Ogleby may decide to perfect herself in blackboard work. Others will look after the course of history, the practical applications, the side-lights from other Scriptures, and so forth. Each will polish his specialty on every lesson until it shines, and some day they will all trade specialties with one another.

The same end, the division of labor, may be gained by the lavish appointment of committees of one,—a committee to read the newspapers, and bring to the lesson the light of current events; a committee to visit other schools and correspond with them in quest of fresh methods; a committee on suggestions from papers and books; a committee on Sunday-school conventions, to attend in person or to read the reports and glean from them, and the like. Of course, all the teachers would serve on these committees in turn.

The executive committee, however, the planning and managing committee, might well be permanent, after you get a successful one. Among the factors of their success will be their power of drawing out plans from others. There might well be a regular time, in every meeting, to invite new ideas for the conduct of future meetings. Indeed, though the teachers'-meetings should be methodical, and should proceed, at least for a period,

according to a well-digested system, yet they should be to the teachers a model of varied ingenuity, since, if *they* fall into a rut, the school will certainly tumble after.

For example of possible variety, take the opening reading of the lesson text. Two teachers might read it antiphonally, one giving a verse in the Authorized Version, the other following with the same verse in the Revised Version. Now the text might be read in a paraphrase, and now in a poetical rendering. Some German scholar might translate it from Luther's Bible, or some classical scholar from the Greek. The conversational and dramatic selections could be arranged as dialogues. The reading of verses might be interlarded with brisk, revealing comments.

Indeed, though the outline of exercises may remain constant, let the emphasis continually vary. This week make a specialty of the study of questions, next week of illustrative applications, next week of reviews, next week of the important matter of lesson outlines. There might even be a short paper on the evening's specialty, followed by a discussion and examples; and thus, though the entire lesson is always studied, every meeting will mark a distinct pedagogical advance.

Next to promptness in arriving, the meeting's vigor will depend on the leader's celerity in grappling with the main subject. A vast amount of time is wasted in teachers'-meetings in clumsy efforts at thoroughness, leading to the relation of much that the teachers know perfectly well already. A good leader will consider first of all how much may safely be omitted and taken for granted. A verse-by-verse treatment is seldom needed. The best

introduction to most divisions of the lesson is the simple query, "Has any one a question to ask on this point?" Occasionally make a special request that each teacher bring to the next meeting one difficulty he has encountered in the study of the lesson, and then attack these difficulties at the very outset.

Get the Teachers to Question.—Broadly speaking, the more the teachers themselves can be persuaded into the interrogative mood the better. Distribute slips of paper now and then, that the teachers may write out their perplexities for discussion at the next meeting. Occasionally get a skilled worker to preside over a "question-box," or get a skilled questioner to plan queries for an "answer-box," to be filled by the teachers. Sometimes appoint a teacher who will prepare himself to stand up and be questioned on the lesson, and sometimes appoint a teacher to prepare a set of questions for use at the next meeting. This last will be an especially valuable exercise if you will criticise these questions, regarding both form and matter, as they are used. Sometimes select a printed set of questions, and make them the basis of the study, criticising them also. Few of our teachers' meetings give sufficient drill on the teacher's fundamental art, the art of questioning.

As another general rule, the more the teachers' meeting is planned to draw out all the teachers, especially the retiring ones, the more useful and attractive will it be. There are many methods. For a while, appoint one teacher each week to tell how he proposes to teach his class on the next Sunday. Then let the whole meeting criticise his plan, favorably or unfavorably. Now and

then, for a change, ask Miss A—— to tell how she would teach the lesson to Mr. B——'s class, getting the primary teacher, for instance, to describe her ideal of an hour in the adult class. One week, ask all the teachers to come ready to name what each will make the leading thought in the lesson as he teaches it. Another week, divide the verses among the teachers, requesting each to bring the brightest thought he can find on his verse, original or selected. Occasionally assign to each teacher one or more verses of the lesson text, that he may lead the discussion of that portion at the next meeting. Once in a while, not often, persuade a teacher to treat the other teachers as children, and teach the lesson to them as she would teach her own class, that she may profit by helpful criticism. Urge the constant use of notebooks, and, that the points of especial helpfulness may not be lost in a swarm of details, select for each week a summarist, who will close the session with brisk reminders of the best suggestions. In many other ways besides these the members of the class may be set to work.

Do not, in your zeal for the lesson, forget the general interests of the school. At regular intervals you might make time for papers on the several problems of your school, each introducing a thorough discussion. It would be an excellent plan to fix a "problem time" in every teachers'-meeting,—a time for the statement of difficulties connected with school management or with teaching. The themes thus brought up will be treated in their turn as soon as is convenient. The same end may be gained, if the teachers are in earnest, by a "suggestion box," or a "problem box," placed at the entrance of their meet-

ing-room. It will prove a great gain if now and then the teachers'-meeting shall resolve itself into a prayer meeting at the close, and carry these perplexities to the Teacher of teachers.

Hold Closely to the Lesson.—It is certain, however, that the teachers will be held most closely to the meeting if the greater part of each session, though the general interests of the school are not forgotten, bears practically and directly on the next Sunday's lesson, giving them what they can utilize in their classes. For example, open each teachers'-meeting with few preliminaries, little singing, a brief prayer. Manage to present always at the start some broad view of the lesson, which will act as a solvent, a combiner, an organizer. Every school should own some manifolding contrivance, and by its use a copy of such an outline might be made for every teacher, together with copies of some illuminating poem, useful for distribution among the scholars, or even of some clarifying diagram, or suggestive sketch, or map. Indeed, it would be easy for this teachers' organization to gather and own a large and increasingly valuable collection of pictures to illustrate the lessons, and even of "curios" illustrating the customs of Eastern countries.

At the opening of each quarter, a "looking forward" meeting should be held. The outline of history to be studied might be fixed by diagrams and a paper or a talk. The logical succession and interdependence of the lessons should be brought out. A series of lesson key-words might be adopted. The quarter's Golden Text might be studied, and the teachers should decide what

are the main truths to be evolved from the three months' lessons, and what facts, as well as what spiritual impressions, the scholars may fairly be expected to carry from the quarter's study.

Midway through the term (I am merely giving sample outlines) the teachers might hold a "question meeting," in preparation for which the following comprehensive queries might be printed on a manifold, and distributed among the teachers: "How are you going to review the last lesson? How will you bring out the connecting links between the last lesson and this? How will you introduce this lesson? How bring out its facts? How impress them? How illustrate its truths? How apply them to the lives of your scholars? How set your scholars to studying the next lesson?" Eight teachers should be appointed, one for each of these questions, to lead in the discussion of it.

Then, at the close of the quarter, there should be held a "looking-backward" meeting, in which, at all events, one plan for review day may be illustrated. For instance, the teachers might practice describing for each other the various scenes studied during the quarter, omitting all proper names and other manifest designations, the rest of the teachers to guess what scene in each case has been described. The week before,—on another occasion,—each teacher might be asked to prepare a set of twelve questions, which, in his judgment, will best draw out the facts and truths of the quarter, and from these sets the teachers would put together a model dozen of questions. At other times, the meeting might consider what simple outline would best fix the course of the

history studied, or the teachers might prepare a scheme for written examinations in all classes.

And now I have sufficiently illustrated my idea of a teachers'-meeting,—a meeting so simple in its elements that any set of teachers may successfully conduct it, yet so expansive and enticing in its possibilities that the wisest and most skilful may find in it the amplest scope. It is not to take the place of individual study, or of special plans suited to the needs of individual classes. Its purpose is information and inspiration, not adaptation. There is no short cut to Sunday-school success, and no teachers'-meeting can convert a lazy man into a teacher. But wherever a company of earnest, teachable Christians, longing after the garner of souls, meet together with the single purpose to become better teachers, there will the Teacher be in the midst of them, and there will he himself conduct a school of the prophets.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RIGHT BAIT

WHEN I go fishing up in the Maine wilderness, I find that it makes all the difference in the world what fly I put on my line. Certain conditions of water, weather, and time of day call for a "dusky miller." Certain quite different conditions call for a "silver doctor." When a trout wants a "Parmachene belle" he wants just that, and nothing else. Except a worm.

There is one problem that is foremost in the thoughts of all earnest Sunday-school workers, and that is how to catch and hold the boys. This anxiety overmatches all other anxieties combined. And the question, as I look at it, is primarily one of the right bait.

When I go fishing for trout, I do not consider what I liked for breakfast nor what I want for dinner; I consider what the trout's mouth is watering for. When the average teacher goes fishing for a boy, however, I fear that she bases her campaign entirely on her own likes and dislikes. She is interested in pretty little stories with lovely morals, and she takes it for granted that the boys will be interested in the same thing. She is fascinated with a volume of Mr. Meyer's noble expositions, and she jumps to the conclusion that the boys will be glad to have her read a chapter to them. She is delighted to discover the hidden symbolism of the Bible, as that Goliath typifies worldliness and David the quiet power

of Christian faith, and she is entirely oblivious to the boy's concentration of interest on Goliath's armor and David's sling. In short, when the trout wanted "dusky millers" she has been baiting her line with "silver doctors," and the trout swim scornfully away.

No one can win a boy except with what a boy likes. The teacher's first task, therefore, is to discover what the boy likes. The discovery may be made in four ways: (1) by intuition, an instinctive sympathy with boys; (2) by living with boys and watching them; (3) by intelligent and patient experimentation, trying this and that and developing what is found effective; (4) by the careful reading of sensible books on the question. Number 1 is a gift of heaven; number 2 is a gift of circumstances; all of us have the beginnings of both within our power, and can go on to develop them. I see no reason, therefore, why the teacher may not work simultaneously along all four lines of approach to the boy.

Thus working, he will discover **three fundamental facts about the boy**: (1) that he is gregarious; (2) that he is play-loving; (3) that he likes to do things. The teacher, man or woman, (and it *may* be a woman quite as successfully as a man, though it usually isn't,) that wins the heart of the boy, will deal not with the boy but with the boys. He will get up a club of some sort, and ally it with his Sunday-school class. It may be a walking club, or a natural history club, or a tennis club, or a checkers club, or a debating club. Some way or other, he will utilize the social instinct of boys. What he could never in the world accomplish with one boy he can easily achieve with twenty.

Then, he will put his Sunday-school work itself as far as possible in the form of play. Contests to see who can learn the most verses, draw the best map, answer most questions. Bible puzzles to solve. The "spell-him-down" scheme applied to the lesson facts. Wooden models to whittle out. Diagrams to construct. Home studies to draw by lot. Why, if the teacher fairly enters into the idea, she can make Bible-study as fascinating a pursuit as foot-ball.

And finally, the boy-winning teacher will remember that the boy would always rather do things than say things or hear things or even see things. Every boy will have a pencil tablet and pencil. Much of the recitation will be written, or drawn. Colored pencils will be at hand, for brightening maps. A blackboard will be part of the class furniture. Bible-marking will become a fascinating pursuit. Sand-maps will vivify Bible geography. There will be Bible biographies to write. There will be charts to devise. In all her work the teacher will ask herself not, "What shall I do?" but, "What can I get the boys to do?"

Of course, these three suggestions run into one another. Of course, too, they cover only a part of the ground. But they cover a very important part of the ground; and I am quite certain that attention to them would double the number of boys in our Sunday schools.

CHAPTER XXXII

HOW TO USE DECISION DAY

A Teacher's Dream.—The teacher was dreaming. Sunday-school teachers often dream, and sometimes their dreams are nightmares.

But this dream contained the Lord Jesus. He was standing with his arms stretched out, and in his eyes was an eager look.

"Where are the souls of my children?" he asked the teacher.

"Here are their bodies," the teacher was able to reply. "They come to school very regularly and promptly."

Jesus took the bodies, and they turned to dust in his hands.

"Where are the *souls* of my children?" Christ insisted.

"Here are their manners," faltered the teacher. "They are quiet and very respectful; they listen carefully. Indeed, they are beautifully behaved."

Jesus took their manners, and they turned to ashes in his hands.

Our Lord repeated his question, "Where are the *souls* of my children?"

"I can give you their brains," the teacher answered. "They can name all the books of the Bible forward and backward. They can repeat the list of the Hebrew kings. They know in order the seventy events of your

life on earth. They can recite the Sermon on the Mount from beginning to end. Really, they are excellent scholars."

Jesus took their brains, and lo! they dissolved to vapor, and a puff of wind blew them away.

"Where are the *souls* of my children?" urged our Lord with sorrowful longing.

Then the teacher was filled with an agony of shame that broke the bands of sleep.

"Alas!" cried the teacher, "I have done much for my children, but it is all nothing because I have not also done the One thing. Henceforth my teaching, though it traverse many ways, shall have One goal, and perhaps it will be given me to dream that dream again."

What it means to bring a soul to Christ few realize, or many would be about it. For that soul it means peace, exultant and growing. It means power, assured and increasing. It means honor and prosperity, on the whole, even in this troubled world. It means this for the coming year, and those months multiplied by the long years of life, and that life multiplied by the unimagined stretches of eternity, and glorified by the unguessed joys of Paradise. It means this for one soul, and for all the others whom that one may reach, and for the myriads these may reach, through nations and generations. This is only a hint of what it means to bring a soul to Christ.

To do this work is the main business of every Sunday school. I fear that sometimes the most applauded scholarship of these recent days forgets this, and seems, at least, to consider the mummy of dead facts more important than the living spirit that has risen from those

cerements. Let us teach our scholars in the proportions that will seem fitting to us a thousand years from now. In the clear light of eternity we shall perceive how the least accretion of divine character enormously outweighs all encyclopedias in the world, and that the details of scholarship are of value only as they build character and confirm it.

This is why Decision Day is the one great day of our school year. Not that decisions for Christ are to be sought only then; they are to be sought any day, and all days. Not that they are to be announced only then; they are to be announced as soon as made. But on Decision Day this great thing will be accomplished: it will be rendered certain that, at least once this year, every unsaved scholar of the school has been urged to decide for Christ.

I want to tell you how I would go about it.

Imprimis, begin now. The first decisions of Decision Day must be made by the teachers. Hold a meeting, teachers and officers together. Let each teacher tell how many scholars in his class are yet outside the church. By the time this list is completed, you will have formed a sufficient argument for Decision Day. You will decide to observe it.

Next, decide that each teacher will have in private a frank and full talk with each unsaved scholar in his class. Do not yield to the temptation to call in some earnest soul who will "draw the net" in the school. Let no man reap your harvest; gather it yourselves.

Excuses are so easy to find!

Your scholars will raise doubts that you cannot answer.

But you can obtain answers from others wiser than you, and always you can hold your scholars to the main question, the character and claims of Christ. Always you can show them that deciding for Christ means trusting him for all things, the honest intention to obey him in all things, and *saying this* before men.

You have already asked them to confess Christ and join his church, and they have refused.

Then there is the more likelihood that the next time will win them! Let them understand that you will ask that question again and again, until it is answered for God and heaven and happiness.

They are careless and indifferent, and not ready to join the church.

Christ came to call the careless and indifferent. They most need Christ. And beneath this mask of bold denial, they, for all you know, are most ready to come to Christ.

Others would have more influence than you.

That does not absolve you from using *your* influence. And even if they refuse you now, in the coming years the very memory of your faithful pleading may draw them, as such memories have drawn thousands, to yield to the Saviour they now reject.

Still, call to your aid the influence of others. Get the help of the parents. Interest the Christian scholars in the winning of their friends. The pastor, the superintendent, some other church-member, may be asked to speak a word to this or that. A sermon should be called for,—a brave, tender, ardent appeal. A church prayer meeting and a young people's prayer meeting should be

given up to the theme. Especially, since the young people are both timid and gregarious, if some are plainly Christians, but shrink from joining the church, approach one after the other with the suggestion that they come in a glorious company, a united class.

If in this way, by appeals and discussions during the lesson hour, and especially by quiet talks of teachers and friends with the scholars, the time is spent during the weeks before Decision Day, then that day will be what it should be, less a day for making decisions than for announcing those already made. During the session on Decision Day I would have a roll-call of classes. Each teacher in turn would rise and announce the number in his class, the number who are already church-members, and the number of those that have decided for the Christian life and wish to join the church. Each announcement should be received with some appropriate comment by the superintendent, and at the close the pastor, or some other Christian honored by all, should give these new confessors a word of hearty greeting.

As to the question whether at this time a general appeal should be made calling for immediate decisions and public confession of Christ, pastors and teachers and churches will differ. In churches not a few, most blessed and permanent results have been gained from just this step, following the thorough preparation I have outlined. If, as each class is called, the Christians and those now ready to confess Christ should rise together, and if class after class should thus rise and remain standing, and if at the beginning and close of the roll-call a loving invitation should be given for instant decisions, to be shown

by simply standing with the rest, many would be swept, by the current of feeling and action, over their doubts and difficulties, which, once surmounted, would never trouble them again.

Only, one caution: let nothing be done or said that would fix a soul in denial, and place it definitely in opposition to Christ. This is Decision Day, and they have not decided yet; that is all. They must think it over. They must talk it over with their teachers. They must pray about it. They must never call it a closed question till the right decision is made. *And they must remember that to-morrow may be too late.*

CHAPTER XXXIII

BIBLE-MARKING IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

PUT a medicine chest, the bottles all unlabeled, in a backwoods cabin, and how far will it go toward filling the place of a doctor? Set a man with a box full of unmarked keys before a locked door, and how long will the door remain closed? Every day men's hearts are sick with troubles for which the Bible contains specifics. Every day confronts us with difficulties to which the Bible holds the keys. But we go to the blessed Book and turn its pages aimlessly, far more likely to hit upon the wrong passage than the right one.

In what chapters would you find answers for a man that doubted Christ's divinity? Where would you find comfort for a mourner? From what part of the volume will you gain courage to undertake a difficult task? What verses are sunshine for the "blues"? These are practical questions. Of what use is your Bible unless you can use it? And the need for it does not often come with a concordance in its hands.

Every one that has tried it, knows that a marked Bible is twice and thrice a Bible; and if our Sunday-school work can furnish the scholars with this tool, it will do much toward making them Bible-lovers and Bible-users.

Therefore I am an advocate of Bible-marking as a regular class exercise; but other considerations also lead me to urge the practice. For one, it insures the presence

of Bibles in the class. To attempt to teach the Bible merely from lesson leaves is like trying to get an idea of an oak from a dried oak-leaf. Moreover, this Bible-marking renders it quite certain that the Bible will be taught as a whole; David will supplement John and Isaiah will talk with Paul, and neither Proverbs nor Habakkuk nor the Cana miracle nor Timothy will be allowed to stand as the Bible's sole temperance teaching.

The exercise of Bible-marking fixes the attention of the class. It creates a novel interest, born of eye and hand as well as brain. It focuses the entire scholar on the lesson.

By Bible-marking the teaching is rendered definite. You must settle on the main theme, and all your Bible-marking must center on that. When review day comes, and these twelve definite and emphasized points pass before you, the culminating advantages of the plan will be most clearly shown.

For Sunday-school use—and for home use, too, for that matter—I believe in the simplest form of Bible-marking. I would use ink, for permanence, though an indelible pencil is nearly as good. I would not use colored inks or pencils,—nothing but black. I would never confuse the eye with markings in the text, but would make all markings in the margin.

A Suggested System.—Every teacher will do well to make his own system; he can work his own best. My system is exceedingly simple. Opposite each text I write a letter or letters indicative of the thought I find prominent in it. Texts on faith all receive an F in the margin; on fidelity, Fi. G is for God; Go, for goodness; Gr for

gratitude, and so on. Every main theme has its subdivisions, which I number. G1, for example, is God's omnipotence; G2, God's omnipresence; G3, God's omniscience. Finally, for each of these subdivisions I fix upon a key-text, the first of a chain of texts which I carry through my Bible. Underneath the G1 that stands in the margin opposite my key-text for God's omnipotence, I write the number of the page where I will find the second text on that subject. Opposite that text I write G1, and beneath that I write the number of the next page that contains a text of the series, and so on in a chain that will not be completed till I cease to find in the Bible any words on that theme. Since I have no financial interest in the sale of the book, and since it is the only work of the kind, I venture to say that in "The Bible Marksman," sold for thirty-five cents by the United Society of Christian Endeavor, Boston, Mass., I have written out this entire system, embodying the fifty-two leading Bible themes, each with its symbol and seven sub-topics, and with thousands of texts thus classified.

I recommend that the class write on the fly leaves of their Bibles their key-texts and symbols, placing after each the number of the page where the chain begins. Only a few texts should be marked each Sunday. Do not try to exhaust the subject. Remember, there are other Sabbaths, and the same theme is certain to come up again. Adding to the chain on other occasions will perpetuate the interest.

Make use, in your marking, of complete stories and entire passages as well as single verses. When you wish to refer to more than one verse, write "vs. 6-10," or

whatever it may be, underneath the symbol, closing the whole with the number of the next page.

For the proper carrying out of this plan, the teacher will find it best to look ahead over the quarter's lessons or the year's, choosing among the many topics involved in each lesson the one that fits into the Bible-marking course; the one, that is, which is not duplicated by lessons soon to come. It is necessary, also, to keep on hand a supply of pens and ink, blotters, erasers, and whatever else is required for the exercise.

As the teacher continues this practice of Bible-marking, many gains will show themselves, additional to those that I have already detailed. Each scholar will want his own Bible; and, since so much work is to be put upon it, this should be a Bible worth keeping all through life, a Bible with good paper, large type, wide margins, substantial bindings. The parents may easily be interested in providing such Bibles for their children.

Neatness may be taught,—nay, *must* be,—and some reward may be given for the most beautiful work.

A practical knowledge of the books of the Bible is gained, and the scholars rapidly become familiar not only with the order of the books, but even with the contents of many books whose very names were formerly almost unknown to them.

The exercise may be used to promote committing the Bible to memory. Get the scholars each Sunday to vote on the verses they have marked, selecting their favorite, and then learning it by heart through the week, so that each one can say it, *with book, chapter, and verse number*, on the next Lord's day.

Best of all, perhaps, the teacher may use the Bible-marking to promote home study. Tell the class in advance around what theme the next Sunday's Bible-marking is to center. Show them how to use Bible index and concordance. Urge them to make at home a little collection of texts suitable to be marked, each text to be read by the class, voted upon, and, if adopted, incorporated in the class chain of verses.

I have indicated only a few of the ways in which a live teacher may make use of Bible-marking as a class exercise. Consecrated ingenuity will discover and invent many other ways, to the great profit of the class, and their decided advancement in Bible knowledge.

CHAPTER XXXIV

HOW TO INSPIRE LOVE FOR THE BIBLE

THIS, after all, is the great problem for Sunday-school workers. When our children become Bible-lovers, they will attend the school regularly, they will study the lessons at home, they will be attentive to the teaching and orderly in the class, they will be led with inspiring certainty into the way of life. We believe all this; that is why we have *Bible* schools. We believe it; but ah, how may we bring it about? This is the problem that involves all other problems,—to make the children Bible-lovers.

And first,—a very simple principle easily overlooked,—you cannot inspire love for the Bible unless you love it yourself. Many a teacher may find in these words a reason for partial or complete failure. If your love for the Bible is feigned or forced, if you read it from duty and not from adoration, if you rather postpone it than anticipate it, how can you expect your scholars to be otherwise? They will inevitably follow your character in preference to your words, if there is any divergence between the two. And your real feeling will show itself plainly, protruding through the most correct speech.

But if, on the other hand, you are a Bible-lover through and through, then it makes little difference what you say, your scholars will be quite certain to catch the blessed contagion. If the Bible is your favorite, instinc-

tive reading ; if you are saturated with it, familiar with all its parts, quoting it unconsciously and often ; if you love even the material volume, love to have it near you and to handle it ; if, next to the Book itself, books about it are your delight ; if this is true of you, the children will reflect these feelings as surely as they answer to your smiles. You must be yourself the kind of Bible-lover you would have each of them become.

But I see that I am taking for granted that you will frankly show your love for the Bible, which some through false modesty foolishly would conceal. If you would lead the children to love the Book, you must carry it openly and proudly,—and well-bound copies, too ; you must handle it reverently, not thumbing it, and rumpling its pages, and breaking its back ; you must quote it lovingly ; you must speak of it enthusiastically, not critically ; you must not be afraid to use those old-fashioned terms, “the precious Gospel,” “the dear old Book,” “Holy Writ,” “inspired Scriptures,” “the glorious Word of God” ; whatever your theory of inspiration may be, you must show that you believe in the Bible with all your heart. Only as your own love for the Bible is thus frank and open will you make expressive Bible-lovers of your scholars.

Next, if the young folks are to become men and women of the Book, they must possess Bibles whose outward appearance is attractive. How can we expect our children to love the small-type, broken-backed, dingy, dog’s-eared Bibles that many of them carry ? You, my dear sir or madam, still love your wife or husband in whatever rags arrayed ; but, outside of fairy stories, one

does not fall in love with a dirty-faced tatterdemalion.

Still more unlikely is it that the bits of Bible that our scholars find on crumpled lesson leaves and torn quarterlies will lead them to love the massive Volume itself, or, indeed, to gain any conception of it as a book. One might as well give a pupil Bartlett's Quotations and expect him therefrom to develop a fondness for Shakespeare.

See that the children have good copies of the Bible, all their own. If they are bound in cloth, let it be *red* cloth, or bright blue; if in leather, let the edges shine with gold. Stamp their name upon the cover. Let the type be as clear and large as may be. That cruel saying, "Young eyes don't mind small type," has started many a young eye toward premature age. But children do love small books, and therefore, while each child should have his complete Bible, I would make generous use also of the Bible portions, copies of the separate books in large type. For this purpose the Modern Reader's Bible and the Temple Bible are admirable.

It is good to give a child a picture Bible, if the pictures really aid his imagination and do not impede it! Far more necessary is it, however, to see that his Bible is in the Revised Version. In a myriad places that version has removed the stumblingblocks out of the way of the child's understanding. And of the various editions of the Revised Version those are best for children that retain the verse divisions of the King James version, because they enable the children more easily to "find the place," and especially because they render the pages more open and interesting to the eye.

But all these matters are preliminaries. Given your own love for the Bible, and their possession of copies of the Bible that they can fall in love with, the first step is merely to **introduce them to the Book**, get them acquainted with it. Children do not fall in love with a stranger.

It is astonishing how children enjoy learning the mere names of the books of the Bible. Those mouth-filling, musical words, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Thessalonians, and the rest, fascinate them before they have the least idea of their meaning. My little girl is, at this particular moment, perfectly delighted with the Minor Prophets, merely as a series of beautiful names. She likes to "bound" the various books,—tell what book comes before and what after. She is keenly interested in Bible hand-drills, finding chapter and verse at call; finding the shortest verse, the longest chapter; finding the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, the Shepherd Psalm; hunting up the Christmas story, the story of Joseph, the story of David and Goliath. Unconsciously, she is getting book outlines and history outlines. She is learning that Christ's words and deeds are to be found in a certain part of the Book, and Solomon's in another, and Abraham's in another. She is slowly grouping histories and prophecies and poems and letters. She is committing bits to memory here and there. She thinks it is play, and so it is; but it is also something more: she is getting her introduction to the Word of God.

After the children, by long, patient, and persistent drill, have gained this introduction to the Bible, what next? Then, just as in the second step of a personal ac-

quaintance, throw them as much as possible together alone. Let them browse in the Bible. What if they do hit on the hard parts? They will understand more than we think they do, and feel what they cannot understand. As likely as not, Daniel or even Jeremiah will become their favorite book of the Old Testament, and Revelation or even Romans, of the New.

It is a good plan to form your class into a Bible-Lovers' Club, just for the purpose of reading the Bible straight through. Some reward, such as a Red Letter Testament, may be given to every child that completes the reading. Let them write the date at the close of each book as they finish reading it. Let them print an X in the corner of each page if they think they understand it, and go over their Bibles with them now and then to increase the number of pages thus marked. If you question the value of such a course in Bible-reading for children, read what Ruskin says about it in the second chapter of his "Præterita," how his mother read the Bible with him, verse about. "She began with the first verse of Genesis, and went straight through, to the last verse of the Apocalypse; hard names, numbers, Levitical law, and all; and began again at Genesis the next day. If a name was hard, the better the exercise in pronunciation,—if a chapter was tiresome, the better lesson in patience,—if loathsome, the better lesson in faith that there was some use in its being so outspoken." And Ruskin counted his mother's Bible drill "the one essential part" of all his education.

I think it quite important that as early as possible the child should be led into the romance of the Bible. I do

not mean the wonderful stories it contains—those, of course; but in addition to them the wonderful story of the Book itself. The child should be brought to see it as a whole, and to realize God's interest in it as a whole, and not merely his care for Isaac and Samuel and Timothy.

To this end much should be told the children of the way the Bible came to us, the story of the manuscripts and their discovery, so full of absorbing interest; the story of the versions and of the successive English Bibles; the great stories of Luther and Wyclif and Tyndale, the King James version, the Victorian revision. When the children come to see how much God cares for the Book, what a wonderful network of providence he has thrown around it, they will come to care for it themselves.

Then, while the scholars are thus browsing in the Book, encourage them to tell what they find. Set apart a few minutes in the class for regular reports of the discoveries made during the week. Any passage that strikes a child as beautiful or helpful he should mark. As he tells about it in the class, the others may wish to mark the same passage in their Bibles. For the purpose of inspiring their enthusiasm for the Bible, one discovery of theirs is worth a hundred of yours, and one report from them is worth a dozen hours' talk from you. What you want is to be pedagogic,—*child-leaders*,—and not didactic,—*child-lecturers*.

All this, without forcing the children, or passing for an instant out of the region of their natural enjoyment. But what if they are not naturally inclined toward the Bible? They *are* naturally inclined toward such employ-

ments as I have outlined. All children like to explore, all children like to show what they have found, all children like stories and are captured by romance. They may not be naturally inclined toward the higher results of love for the Bible, but if they once feel that love, though on the lower plane, it will grow—never fear—to the highest outreachings.

Do not expect it all at once. Growth is slow into any good thing. How gradually, as the fruit of what long patience, does a baby grow into an understanding love of the mother! And we are all at first but babes in the Book. These childish markings of tiny texts, and fumbings after the story of Gideon, and learning of the order of books, and plodding through chapters, are little things to us but great to them,—the narrow path to the mountain peaks of mighty doctrines,—inspiration, sanctification, justification by faith. They are babes now, but our reward is sure, for they are to become men and women of the Book!

CHAPTER XXXV

PENCIL AND PAPER

FEW Sunday-school teachers realize how great aids are a pencil and a piece of paper in the teacher's hands, and in the hands of each member of the class. Probably, for most purposes, a blackboard is better for the teacher's use. Not many classes, however, can have that luxury, while not even its presence renders unnecessary the scholars' own use of writing materials. Whatever holds the hand holds the head. There is no attention-winner like a pencil tablet. Work with it overcomes the fidgets of the most restless scholar, while at the same time it may be made delightfully to clarify the lesson facts and teachings, and fasten them in the memory.

The teacher's first aim is to get attention. There is no better way than by placing a piece of paper where all can see it, and putting on it a striking fact or question, or a simple sketch or diagram. If the teacher has planned this opening well, he will gain his scholars' eyes and brains without speaking a word.

The wise teacher, too, has in his mind a lesson analysis, —some simple outline which presents the facts and truths of the lesson as concisely as a picture. For example:—

SEED	}	by the wayside = careless	} HEARTS.
		among thorns = sinful	
SOWN		in stony ground = shallow	
		in good soil = thoughtful	

Such a synopsis, if written upon the teacher's pencil tablet as the lesson progressed, and copied, step by step, by every scholar, would fix forever the central truths of the Parable of the Sower.

Paraphrases.—If the scholars have not studied the lesson, an admirable introduction to it may be given in the following way. Explain what a paraphrase is, and get each scholar to read over the lesson text and then write it out in his own words. As the class become more expert in this exercise, the teacher may read the lesson to them, and their paraphrases may be entirely from memory. Let each read his paraphrase aloud, the others telling what has been omitted in each case. By the time this exercise is completed, the lesson facts will be very familiar to all; and attention, moreover, will have been held throughout.

That may be done, if the lesson has not been studied at home; but the pencil and paper may be made to emphasize and direct home study. For this purpose, at the close of each lesson the teacher will dictate to the class a statement of the subject of the next lesson, and how much of the Bible should be read in connection with it. He will follow this with a few comprehensive questions or themes for study, or he may dictate to each one a separate subject for research. For example, if the subject is the resurrection, references will be given to all the Gospel accounts of the resurrection, and to a few of the leading references to that great event made in the Epistles and the Revelation. Then, to the whole class or to individuals, he will dictate such themes as the following: "Make a tabular statement of the events connected with

the resurrection." "Why do you believe these accounts of the resurrection?" "What was the effect of the resurrection upon the disciples?" "What results should follow in our living if we believe the resurrection?"

Once in a while—I would not recommend the method except for occasional use—each scholar may be asked to write a **two-minute essay** on his theme, to read before the class. If you have a bright class, it will even be possible, after a short discussion of the lesson, to give them pencil and paper, and ask each to write an essay on the spot, the same general topic being assigned to all, or each receiving a slip of paper appointing him to a theme of his own.

It is evident that such drills as these, and the mere use each Sunday of pencil and paper for any purpose, will make a **written examination** seem the natural thing. The scholars will not receive the suggestion with incredulous, blank dismay. And if a teacher really wants to discover whether his scholars have made any permanent gain, no method of discovery is to be compared with the written examination.

A Summary.—If pencil and paper are useful at the opening of the lesson and during its progress, they are no less useful at the close. You want to bind together what has been taught. You want to be sure of some permanent and adequate impression as the result of the lesson half-hour. No lesson is well taught till it is well summed up, and no summary is quite so good as that put upon paper by the scholars, either at your dictation or each for himself.

As you make use of pencil and paper, uses for them

will multiply. Now you will draw a sketch map, which your class will copy as you draw. Next Sunday, they will draw the same map from memory. Now you will all make diagrams, of the Herod family, perhaps. Now you will illustrate the lesson truths with a simple picture, every eye in the class being intent on your pencil tablet. On their pencil tablets the scholars will write down the bright quotations you want them to remember. For a season, they will record there one Bible fact each Sunday. Indeed, there is no end to the usefulness of pencil and paper,—if you only have them to use.

Keep on hand, therefore, in the place where your class meets, as many blocks of paper as you have scholars, and a few more. Let the paper be rough, that the pencil marks may be black. The pencil tablets should have a stout backing, that the scholars may write on their knees. Have always ready a supply of soft pencils, nicely sharpened. Some teachers will be able to make profitable use of colored pencils also.

Indeed, though what is written in the class will be of value even if thrown away immediately, serving efficiently to fix in mind the lesson facts and teachings, yet it is a decided advantage if the sheet used each Sabbath can be made so attractive that it will be preserved as a **souvenir**, and referred to constantly. Their usefulness in reviews is especially obvious. The sheets should be of uniform size from week to week, and at the end of the year they might be bound neatly in strong covers.

In short, like all teaching methods that are based on the fundamental likings and needs of the young, this method is susceptible of endless applications, and wise

use of it in one way is certain to suggest further use. There are the richly-freighted leaves of the Bible ; there are the waiting tablets of your scholars' brains ; there are the beautiful tablets of white paper. So utilize these paper tablets that upon those mysterious brain tablets may be inscribed God's words of salvation, and they may become living Tables of the Law.

CHAPTER XXXVI

WORKING WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY

THE young people's society and the Sunday school are sister-organizations, closely akin in their histories and largely sympathetic in their methods. How shall they be brought into harmonious and mutually helpful relations?

Separate Fields.—In the first place, negatively, the young people's society should not undertake to do the distinctive work of the Sunday school, which is instruction in the Bible, nor should the Sunday school attempt to carry on the distinctive work of the young people's society, which is training for the mature work of the church.

Many are constantly urging the young people's societies to supply this or that deficiency, real or imagined, in the Sunday school, but the temptation to enter this field has been, in the main, resisted. The only approach to aggression on Sunday-school domains has been the somewhat wide use by the older societies of Taylor's text-book on the life of Christ, a work originating in the Epworth Leagues but largely used by Endeavorers also, and the use by Junior societies of a life of Christ for young people, published by the Christian Endeavor Society and written by Dr. Stewart. In addition, the present series of Junior Christian Endeavor topics will spend four years in a regular progress through the Bible.

The decided tendency is to make the prayer-meeting topics, both of Junior and older societies, more systematic in their selection of Scripture passages and more orderly in their survey of Scripture doctrines; but always this distinction holds, that the Sunday-school work with the Bible is educational, the Bible work of the young people's society is devotional and practical; in the Sunday school the scholars take in, in the society the members give out; the Sunday school is chiefly for understanding and believing, the society is for applying. If this reasonable and profitable distinction is held, the two agencies will be kept from clashing even where they approximate most closely, and the society will supplement the school at a point where the very exigencies of time, if nothing else, will always render it deficient.

A Practice Ground.—In the second place, positively, the young people's society will find in the Sunday school the nearest, the most natural, and therefore the most fruitful field for the practice of those activities to which its members are serving apprenticeship. Most of our societies recognize this relationship by the regular appointment of Sunday-school committees. These committees, usually consisting of the older members, are called on by the superintendent for a variety of services. They often act as substitute teachers, and, indeed, this is their most frequently performed duty. They sometimes constitute a normal class in the school, studying each Sunday the next Sunday's lesson, with a special view to teaching it if called upon.

In addition, these committees often canvass the town or neighborhood for new Sunday-school scholars. They

often act as the teacher's aids in looking up absentees. They organize Sunday-school choirs, and help the superintendent prepare Sunday-school concerts. In short, in a multitude of schools, the superintendent draws upon the young people, through this committee as intermediary, for a variety of helpful services, which train the young people and provide Sunday-school workers for the future, at the same time that they contribute to the school's immediate prosperity.

Cognate Subjects.—The young people's prayer meetings often add to the Sunday-school interest in a way not always recognized, because few outside the societies perceive the frequent dependence of the young people's prayer-meeting topic upon the Sunday-school topic that has preceded it. Certainly half the time the latter is derived from the former, taking up some important practical theme which the teachers in the school have had all too little time to develop, illustrating it with other Scriptures, and setting the young people to discussing it in the light of the historical studies in the Sunday school. I have found that, though this connection of topics is never advertised, the young people themselves always recognize it and utilize it admirably.

Mutual Helpfulness.—In the third place, if the young people's society should thus aid the Sunday school, certainly the latter has some duties toward the former. It is plainly to the interest of the school that all its scholars should be members of the society, and both teachers and officers should work to this end. Especially, however, the Sunday school can aid the society by using it. Nothing is more certainly fatal to the progress of a learner

than not to be allowed or compelled to practise what he is learning; and the school is one of the practising grounds of the society.

If teachers and superintendents would everywhere utilize to the full the members of their young people's societies, enduring at the start their necessary crudities for the sake of the final gain, they would do the societies the best of services, and would themselves in the end reap great profit for their schools.

CHAPTER XXXVII

WHY DO WE TEACH IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL?

Most work is made or unmade by its motive. If the motive is unworthy, the work is sure to be below its possibilities. If the motive is lofty, it will often change a dwarf to a giant.

This is true even of manual labor, true even of drudgery. A swineherd may so tend his pigs that the sty becomes a cathedral. A king may so rule a nation that his palace becomes a sty.

But if it is true of the lowliest toil that it may be transformed or degraded by its motive, still more is it true of work in the spiritual realm. It is not always easy to tell whether a mason is cutting stone with his soul or only with a chisel; it is always possible to tell at a glance whether a teacher is putting his soul into his task.

A clear purpose gives force to a man's work. It is like a rifle bore to a bullet. Knowing why one does a thing helps to do it. A walker will always go farther if he has some goal than if he is aimlessly strolling. Sunday-school teachers, in the main, persist magnificently in their self-appointed task. Certainly the average length of service of Sunday-school teachers equals that of secular teachers, though the Sunday-school workers are unpaid. This persistence is due to the inspiring purpose that animates most teachers in the Sunday school.

Nevertheless, there are many Sunday-school teachers that lack this worthy and impelling motive, and their service is correspondingly weak and wavering. They have in view no exhilarating goal. A comparatively slight barrier will stop them altogether.

What, then, is an adequate purpose? Why do we teach in the Sunday school?

And first let us clear the way with a few negatives.

It is not our main purpose to teach Hebrew history. A knowledge of Hebrew history is valuable, but without a purpose beyond and above it, we should do better to teach the history of our own country.

That purpose, which is to vitalize every step of our historical studies in the Sunday school, is to exhibit Christ as the climax of Hebrew history, the summit to which all before him rises and from which all later events receive their significance. If, for example, we cannot relate the exodus to Christ, we might as well study in our Sunday schools the ways of God in the abolition of modern slavery. If our scholars do not get closer to Christ at every point in their Hebrew history, we might as well use our Sundays for any other history.

Neither is it our main purpose to teach Hebrew literature. It is a noble literature, the Bible is a glorious book; but there are other noble literatures and glorious books. Unless the literature and book are unique, unless they come from God as no other writings do, and lead to Christ as no other writings do, there is no more reason why on Sunday we should hold Bible schools than Shakespeare schools. The Bible has no special pertinence for Sunday schools unless we teach it, not as

fine writing, but to make fine characters, Christly lives.

Neither is it the chief object of our Sunday schools to give instruction in ethics, in morality. Most of our scholars, probably all of them, *know* what they ought to do, but they do not do it. Unaided by Christ, they will not do it, they cannot do it. Except as we bring Christ into our lessons, and attach to him all our instruction in duty, we are building a factory and leaving out the engine room. There are Sunday schools that have courses in Emerson, and his rules for the conduct of life; but they are consistent, for they belong to churches that consider Christ a mere man.

Nor is it the chief object of our Sunday schools to teach the Christian philosophy, on such themes as sin, immortality, heaven, the nature of God. Without Christ, we have no interpretation of these teachings, no proper understanding of them. Without Christ, we have no authority for them.

No; if our Sunday schools have not as their one overmastering object the eager purpose to make Christians, we might as well be up to date; we might as well have Tolstoi schools, and Carlyle schools, rather than Bible schools. Studying the Bible for its literature is carving a statue; for its history, unwrapping a mummy; for its philosophy, painting a picture; for its morality, dressing a dummy; for its Christ, *making a man*. When we study the Bible for its history, it becomes a text-book; for its ethics, a law-book; for its literature, a picture-book; but when we study it to make Christians, it becomes a Book of Life.

This principle is the chief test to use in selecting lesson helps. Do they exalt Christ? With all their discussions of history, literature, customs, languages, is this one purpose always uppermost, to make Christians? If it is not, I care not how learned and brilliant are the editors and how attractive the contents.

This principle governs also the teacher's preparation for his teaching. If his motive is merely to give information, he will plan how to pour facts into his scholars' minds but not how to pour life into their souls. He will study over his lesson, but not pray over it. He will examine his class, but not inspire them. His will be a ministry of lore, not of love; to heads, rather than hearts.

But if, on the other hand, it is the one passionate desire of his teaching to make Christians, he will hold this purpose in view throughout his preparation for the class. He will ask himself every week, "How can this lesson be made to show forth Christ? to bring him nearer to my scholars?" He will look over the lessons far ahead, and plan his campaign for souls. He will make one evangelistic point each Sunday. One lesson will introduce a bit of Christian evidence from miracles; another lesson, from prophecy; with another lesson, he will make a direct appeal for the Christian decision. There will be no lesson without the Lord.

The same principle controls the mode of teaching after the preparation has been made. In this matter the teaching of the Bible is different from the teaching in secular schools, and neglect of this difference is responsible for many misleading comparisons between the two. For no one teaches zoology in order to make his scholar

a bird or a lion, or botany to make him a tree, or geometry to make him a triangle, or geology to make him a rock. But one *does* teach the Bible to make the scholar a rock, a Peter! At the most, one teaches geology to make the scholar a geologist, an assayer, a mine superintendent; but that is only to give him a working knowledge of geology. Now a knowledge of Christianity is not enough; our scholar must *be* a Christian.

So that it is not enough for the teacher to find Christ in a lesson; he must set his scholars to seeking him and finding. He must interest them in relating all the lessons to him. For example, he may have them mark their Bible margins red wherever he comes in, as at the pass-over, the brazen serpent, the ark of the covenant.

And so the wise teacher will test his teaching—partly, to be sure, by what his scholars know about the Bible, because that knowledge is part of the raw material of character; but chiefly by the Bible they have already built into character. Constantly he will ask himself regarding them, “Are they growing more unselfish? more prayerful? more obedient? more trustful and happy?” And if he can answer those questions in the affirmative, he will care comparatively little whether they can tell when Ahab reigned or who Philemon was. His test of his teaching is Christlikeness.

But this motive includes all others, and emphasizes them. In proportion as we get our scholars to love Christ and his service, they will want to know more about his words, his book, his land, his people. The most ardent and successful students of the Bible have been impelled by love to Christ. Indeed, except to those

that love Christ, the Bible is not an especially interesting book.

This motive, the purpose of character-building, dignifies the work of the Sunday-school teacher, and gives it permanent value. We are not sure that Paul's letter to Rome or the epistle to Ephesus will be published in heaven, or that the Hebrew Psalter will be printed there; but we are sure that Paul will be there, and David, speaking more marvelous thoughts, singing more wonderful songs. The question is not so much as to our scholars' remembering the dates of Paul's life, though that is well, or the details of David's campaigns, though that is well, as it is whether our scholars will carry to heaven the soul that can join with Paul and David in the celestial converse and the great new song. It is for this eternal result that we are aiming.

And, finally, this desire to make Christians gives zest to Sunday-school teaching. That is why men and women toil in the Sunday school without pay. You cannot get unpaid teachers of geology, of secular history, of English literature. As soon as you leave out the evangelistic element, and put Sunday-school teaching on the plane of the secular schools, you must bring in hired teachers and hired superintendents. The glory of our Sunday-school work is that it is free service; and that is also its prosperity.

I was talking last week with an estimable lady who described to me a Sunday-school class of seven boys, wild, restless youngsters, whom she had taken up, years ago, when no one else wanted them. She told with keen delight how she had won them, and how, now that they

were married men in business, they still came back to see her almost as if she were their mother. And how her face shone as she came to the climax of the story: "Six out of the seven have joined the church, and I think the seventh will, some day!"

Ah, that is the goal which every Sunday-school teacher worth the name keeps full in view! This is the record he keeps, amid all his records of attendance, and strives to complete. This is the object of his eager prayers, his self-sacrificing toil. With an ardor more strenuous than a hunter's for the chase, with ambition more engrossing than any Cæsar's, with longing keener than a miser's, he pursues this spiritual quest. And if he can be sure that of all his class a single soul—still more if the entire class—has made definite choice of Jesus Christ, so as to serve him and enjoy his blessedness through the endless ages, then our Sunday-school teacher has received his exceeding great reward.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HOW TO TELL A BIBLE STORY

“OF all the things that a teacher should know how to do, the most important, without any exception, is to be able to tell a story.”

Those are the words of President G. Stanley Hall, the eminent educator. They urge a qualification that many teachers are slow to seek, and exalt an ideal that many teachers belittle. But they hold up as our pedagogical model the great Teacher, who taught many things, and at one time all things, in parables. If we desire his success we must study his method, and imitate it as well as we can.

Of course it is not merely Bible stories that a skilful teacher is prepared to relate with effectiveness, but stories from a wide range of sources will be introduced, to illustrate the teaching from modern life. Bible stories, however, are the wise teacher's staple, and if he can tell them well he can tell any story well; therefore I have narrowed my subject to them.

The outline of the art of telling Bible stories is very simple; the practice is not so easy! But the outline is merely six points: (1) You must know the story. (2) You must know more than the story. (3) You must imagine more than you can know. (4) You must know the children and love them. (5) You must know the

Saviour and love him. (6) You must practise. Let us consider those points in order.

And first, you must know all of the story that the Bible tells. Its outline must be firm in your mind, and every recorded detail must be fixed in its proper place in the-outline.

Try to rehearse to yourself any "familiar" Bible story, and see how vague is your conception of it, how confused your memory. Take for example the striking contest on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Where did Elijah come from? Are you quite sure? Where did he meet Obadiah? Who spoke first, and just what was that conversation? What did Ahab say when Obadiah brought him the news? Or did he say anything that is recorded? How many priests came to Mount Carmel? How soon did they come? Does the Bible say? Who spoke first, up there? What was done first? And what next? What did Ahab have to say? Did he say anything, so far as we know? When did Elijah take matters into his own hands? What did he do first? What did he say first? How many of us, though we have read the account and heard it read many times, could answer such questions as those? And yet they must be answered, and many more of the same sort, before one is prepared to tell that story to the boys and girls.

We think we know so much more about the Bible than we do know! Our first step, if we want to become able to tell any of the Elijah stories, must be to master thoroughly all that the Bible tells us about that remarkable man and those around him. We must compare

Kings and Chronicles. With the aid of the concordance and Bible index we must ransack the entire Bible for references to him.

And we must know the facts perfectly. They must become instinctive. We must not be obliged to think what is coming next. First we must go over it again and again with the Bible before us, referring at every step to the record. Then we must go over it apart from the Bible, on our walks to and fro, while sitting in the twilight, the first thing on awaking in the morning. We must make it a road we can travel with our eyes shut.

It is useful to commit much to memory. The graphic Scripture words will set forth the story, when we come to tell it, far better than any words of our own. It is well to draw a diagram of the course of the story. It is well to write it all out from memory. It is well to go over it with other learners, associating yourself in the endeavor with teachers whose aim is the same. It is well to allow some time to elapse and then go back to the story, to see how tenacious is your grasp upon it. In all these ways, and in many others that you will perforce discover for yourselves, you must make the Bible outline of the story an ineffaceable part of your mind.

But it is only an outline, even then. The Bible is a wonderfully condensed book. Stories that a modern author would stretch through three hundred pages are crowded into a chapter or six verses. Moreover, the Bible, we must never forget, is a foreign book,—foreign, at least, to our outward experience, though grandly native to our hearts. Its scenes are among distant lands.

Its characters are people of strange races, of customs, speech, and habits of thought that differ largely from our own. Before we can really tell a Bible story we must fill in the details of common experience that did not need insertion before an Oriental audience, since they were supplied instinctively; but with us, and especially with children, their absence leaves the narrative either bare or quite misleading.

It is the heedless way of some teachers to supply these details out of our own modern life, as Christmas Evans, in his graphic recital of the Gadarene miracle, makes the astonished family of the restored demoniac view his orderly approach (clothed and sane)—from the window, altogether oblivious to the fashion of Jewish architecture. Thus the famous painting, da Vinci's "Last Supper," pictures our Lord and the twelve seated, upright, at a modern table. There are features of that account, as also in the story of the woman with the alabaster box of ointment, that cannot be understood until we know how they reclined at table in those days, and the shape of the tables.

And so, before we can properly tell a Bible story, we must fill in the Bible outline, we must know more than the story. As we talk of the "lilies of the field" we must not be thinking of our lilies. As we tell of the wheat and the tares, we must not have in mind our trim fields and our reapers and threshers. Before we can relate the Cana miracle we must know about Eastern marriages; or the Nain miracle, we must know about Eastern funerals. We must not try to tell the story of Elisha and the Shunammite, still less the story of Christ

and the man borne of four, without understanding how they built houses in those days.

Sport is made of the old woman who had read the dictionary through, and had found it very pleasant reading, but disconnected. There is one such volume that every Sunday-school teacher should read through, and that is the Bible dictionary; at least, its articles of general applicability, such as "Writing," "Houses," "Agriculture," "Money," "Time." Along with that should go much reading of volumes of travel and accounts of ancient social life, such as Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," the works of Trumbull and Tristram; vivid commentaries like those of Geikie, Farrar, Edersheim, Maclaren; stories like "Ben Hur," "Come Forth!" and "The Pillar of Fire." As we go on in such reading and study, filling in the Bible outlines with a fuller knowledge of Bible times, places, and people, the Scriptures will begin for the first time to be contemporary with us, and we can relate the Bible stories almost as if the events had come under our own eyes.

Almost, but not quite. For that climax of story-telling power we need not only to know the story, and more than the story, but, in the third place, we must imagine more of it than we can know.

And here is where so many fail. This is why so many Bible teachers, well informed and industrious, do not grasp the hearts of their scholars: they lack the creative faculty of imagination. They have fixed the outline, the bones, of the story. They have even filled in the outline, laying flesh upon the skeleton; but they have not breathed into their figure the breath of life.

For example, you may wish to tell of Jeremiah in prison. The first step is to read all you can find that relates to the matter, in Kings and Chronicles, in Jeremiah and Lamentations, and even in the Psalms. The second step is to learn all you can about the prisons of those days, the darkness, the foulness, the utter horror of them. But the third step is to put yourself in the place of the prophet and try to think his thoughts: "Oh, if Josiah had not gone to Megiddo! Oh, if I had been captured with Daniel, or carried away with Ezekiel! Has my God forsaken me? What is Baruch doing now, I wonder. Perhaps he is trying to persuade the guard to give me a little fresh air, or a ray of light. Ah, for a breath of the breeze on Olivet! What is that noise—drip! drip! drip! And what is that long, slimy thing I just touched with my bare foot? Is it a water snake? Verily this is a land of serpents, and they are coiled around my nation, from the feet to the head!"

Is all that going beyond the Scripture? Only beyond the letter of it. For Jeremiah must have had such experiences, and he must have thought such thoughts. It is by such imaginative entering into the Bible stories and living there that the great preachers, such as Moody and Spurgeon, have gained their spiritual triumphs. It is by such "fancies," as the Dryasdusts sneeringly call them, that the Bible becomes alive to us, and we can make it vital to other souls.

How shall we become able thus to vivify a Scripture narrative? Only by long thought. We must brood over it lovingly. We must take up character after character, and persistently try to put ourselves in his place.

We must ask ourselves at every turn in the story, "Now what would I do, if this should happen to me? What would I say? If this were said to me, what would I think? How would I answer? How would I feel? What would I do next?"

Suppose, for example, you wish to enter imaginatively the story of Zaccheus. You might first go through the scene in the person of Zaccheus. Picture him to yourself—a short, stubby little Jew. His hair is bristly; one lock sticks straight up. His eyes are small and calculating. Put in the little touches,—the tear in his clothes that he got in his hurried slide down that sycamore. Stop. View the scene through the eyes of others. Peter saw it. What would he think, as he noticed the eager, red-bearded face thrust through the branches? Judas saw it. Ah, what did that scene mean to Judas? Zaccheus's wife was looking on in amazement, and with a wildly rising, unreasonable hope. There, in the crowd, is Isaac bar Daniel, who has just been driven to beggary by Zaccheus's exactions. What black rage fills his heart as he sees the active little man wriggling along the sycamore branch! There was a small boy in that tree—why, of course there was! And Zaccheus pushed him aside with a curse, and almost threw him to the ground. What did young Ben think, and say?

In that way let your fancy play around the scene. Can you not see Zaccheus boastfully bowing Christ into his fine house, the little figure almost tall in his sudden good fortune? And perhaps our Lord said sadly to the tax-gatherer: "*Whose* is this fine house, Zaccheus?" Then, as the publican lowered his head, our Lord may

have added, gently, "My friend, I would rather abide with you in a hovel, that was all yours."

Dwell with sympathetic insight upon every detail of the entertainment, as it must have occurred. Imagine the steps by which Zaccheus rose. At first, perhaps, he thought to himself, "I must—yes, I *must* give back that money I screwed out of Jacob bar Jonathan." Then: "I must go into this thing more thoroughly; I must restore every penny." Then, the splendid outburst of repentance and of promise in which all the story has its crown.

This poetic ability to enter other lives is the third essential for the real understanding of a Bible story; but the understanding of a story is not the telling of it—ah, no! In unfolding the art of narration I must hasten to add a fourth requirement: you must know and love the children to whom you are telling the story. You must enter the hearts of the children, as you have already entered the heart of the story. You must catch their eager spirit. You must see how their fresh vivacity demands movement from you, briskness, energy, a whiff of fun. You must understand how little will arouse their imagination, how quickly they catch an idea. You must sympathize with their youthful passion for life, their capacity for all amounts of preaching if it is incorporated in life, and for *no* amount of it if it is detached from life. You must see how they need and enjoy repetition,—the repetition of thoughts and phrases in a story, the repetition, endlessly, of the story itself. You must try to see why Joseph is a favorite with them and Paul usually is not, and you must seek to present the story of Paul with

those elements of romance and of simple, dramatic action which exist there, but do not lie on the surface as they do in the famous tale of the Old Testament. In fine, you must disburden yourself of your years, of your adult ways of thinking, and you must put yourself in the place of your youthful auditor, as you have succeeded in putting yourself in the place of your characters.

I am writing to Sunday-school teachers, and so I need only mention the fifth essential of the art of Bible story-telling: You must know and love Christ, the greatest teller of fascinating tales. You must get his insight into truth; you must have his love for children. You must draw near to him; there is no other way of drawing near to his children, or of drawing them to him. Especially, in all your story-telling you must seek to exalt him, and you must seek nothing else. Self-forgetfulness is one of the great secrets of the story-teller's art, as self-consciousness is his certain failure. The way to success in story-telling, as in all things, is the way of the cross.

And my last injunction of the six needs also only a word: *Practise!* It will go clumsily at first. Art is long; the story-teller's art is very long. Imagination will be dull, facts will escape your memory, relations will be confused, you will seem to be acting a part; and since you do not convince yourself with the tale, of course you will convince no one else. But persevere, persevere! Study results. If you fail, see why you fail, and thus lay the only foundation for success. Study different methods. Listen to others that know how to do it. Catch their points of effectiveness. Above all things, practise! practise! practise!

And as you go on, month after month, telling the old, old stories, telling them with a love for them and for the children and for your Saviour, crowding into them an ever-growing wealth of knowledge, inspiring them with an ever more vivid insight, thus, as the months go by, you will increase in the power of a teacher, what has become real to you will become real to your scholars, and the wonderful Bible story, from cover to cover, will be to you and to them the words of eternal life.



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