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Sunday-School Essentials

WHAT EVERY SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER AND SUPERINTENDENT NEEDS THE MOST IN ORDER TO WIN SUCCESS

BY

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PREFACE

At different times and under different circumstances very different things are essential for Sunday-school success. I do not pretend that this book treats all of these. It does aim, however, to discuss the Sunday-school needs most commonly felt, and to provide practical suggestions regarding them.

The thoughts and plans given in these pages all come out of actual Sunday-school work, and it is my hope and prayer that they may prove useful in other Sunday-school work, and helpful to other Sunday-school workers.

Amos R. Wells.

Boston.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL ESSENTIALS

I

THE ONE SUFFICIENT MOTIVE

The Sunday-school teacher is beset with a crafty temptation — to work for himself.

It is natural and right to want our pupils to love us; indeed, we cannot really teach them much until they love us. But the mere desire for popularity, that these bright young folks may hang upon us like bees upon a flower and thereby advertise our sweetness to the world, accomplishes very little in Sunday-school teaching. "Woe unto you," said Christ, "when all men shall speak well of you!" He might even have said, "all children." There may easily come a time when your true glory will be that you are unpopular with your class, for a season.

The right sort of teaching, based on the one sufficient motive, will make you beloved in the end; but it is through so deep an absorption in the great, fundamental Sunday-school aim that actually you will not care whether your pupils love you or not, actually you will not think about that matter at all. Does this appear harsh? Wait; read on.

Sometimes this temptation to work for ourselves in our teaching springs from the eagerness for applause.

We want to hear people say: "What a fine teacher Miss Symonds is! how ingenious! how tactful! how skilled! Her pupils are indeed fortunate." We want our class pointed out as the model class, and our methods held up as examples for the other teachers.

And of course it is wise and right to seek the best methods, and aim at perfection in the beautiful and difficult art of teaching. Without this desire and practice we shall hardly succeed; but we shall not succeed, either, if this is our main motive. The shrewdest forms of questioning, the most alluring "manual methods," the brightest anecdotes and illustrations, all are but tithing mint and anise and cummin if in them we are neglecting a weightier matter, the one weighty matter.

I spend no small part of my time in writing about good methods in teaching, but it is time thrown away unless teachers will put back of the best methods the best motive. That motive will vivify the methods; without it they are only empty shells. If a teacher lacks that motive I should say to him, "It makes no difference how you teach; pay no attention to that just now; first things first: consider *why* you are teaching."

If one of the temptations of a teacher is to work for himself, another temptation is to work for his pupils.

"What!" you exclaim; "are we not to make our pupils' welfare our main thought?" No; strange as it seems to say it, we are not.

The teacher whose main thought is his own popularity or reputation is dependent for his success on his pupils' responsiveness; but if his main thought is his pupils' welfare, he is again dependent for his success upon his

pupils' responsiveness. That is a matter largely beyond his control, and true success is always within a worker's control. Our pupils may prove careless, indifferent, ungrateful; bad home influences, evil companions, worldly temptations, the work of Satan and his cohorts, may be too much for us. Is our work therefore a failure? Yes, if we predicate success upon our pupils' salvation. No, if our motive is deeper, and seeks a deeper and surer reward.

Ah, brothers and sisters in this holy calling, one purpose alone can furnish a firm fulcrum for our lever, and that is the desire to please our Saviour!

We have no right, after our teaching, to ask ourselves any question but this, "Have I pleased Christ?"

This is within our control, this pleasing of Christ. It means that our hearts be pure, and that we do our best. Christ is not pleased with slovenly methods, but He is pleased with our best.

We are like a man sent out to sow a field; if the seed falls on stony ground or shallow ground, and if the birds come and eat it up, yet our work is a success because we have pleased the Master of the field. We may be sure that He will cause some of the seed to bring forth sixty or a hundredfold; but if He does not, still we may be sure of our success. The success of the seed is not the success of the sower.

When our teaching is thus based upon the one sufficient motive it is thereby freed from all anxiety. We shall be calm and peaceful. Every Sabbath will bring its reward in the Master's "Well done."

We shall not love the children less, but more; because

they are Christ's dear children. We shall not do our work less faithfully, but more faithfully; because it is Christ's work. We shall toil no less eagerly, but His broad shoulders will be under the burden; the responsibility will be His. Our teaching will be lifted above passions and ambitions and frets and disappointments and fears. We shall come out into a large place, the realm of quietness and certainty.

And this life with Christ, this one motive of Christ-pleasing, will infallibly in the end make us beloved and honored, and draw our pupils to the love of Christ.

II

LOVE FOR THE PUPILS

Among the Sunday-school teacher's fundamental needs is certainly love for his pupils. Fear of his pupils surely will not carry him far, nor will desire for their good opinion; nothing will buoy him over the many difficulties of a teacher but a deep love for those he is teaching.

Love for them will not always be easy. Children often show their worst side to those that are trying to help them. Your pupils will be careless at times, and indifferent; they will be stupid occasionally; often they may be talkative and mischievous and sometimes even impudent. Love for them will positively be needed to overcome the repugnance that these actions will arouse, and keep the teacher a teacher.

The work of the Sunday-school teacher is hard: it means time taken from other things for study of the Bible and for visiting with your pupils, and it requires endless patience and persistence. Love alone can keep us at our difficult task — love for Christ, but a Christ-love that reaches out in sincere love for Christ's children.

This must not be a merely sentimental love, based on beautiful poems and exquisite pictures of childhood, feeding on fair faces and curls and dimples and clear young voices. The physical side of a child possesses great charm, and it is an inspiration to think of the boundless

possibilities before a boy or a girl; but, like a summer landscape before a thunder-storm, all these allurements flee before a gust of petulance or selfishness or ugliness, and nothing remains but a disgusting sense of original sin.

What kind of love for our pupils must we seek, and how are we to get it?

Here, as everywhere, Christ must be our model. How can He, how does He, love us? The best of us have so much evil in us, the loveliest of us have so much ugliness! And Christ is so unselfish and so beautiful! If we can get at the secret of His love for us, we may apply it to our pupils.

Now Christ loves us partly because we are His workmanship. He created us in the beginning, and He continually preserves us. Somewhat as a mother loves even her misshapen child, or as an author loves his poem though the lines limp, or as a carpenter loves his table though one of the boards is cracked, so Christ honors in us the work of His own hands though we have spoiled it. Burbank's Shasta daisy must be sweeter to him than any common flower, because he has put so much of himself into it; and so the more creative work we do for our pupils, the more we shall love them. As we improve their characters, though only slightly, and as we teach them, though ever so little, we shall begin to love them.

Again, Christ loves us because He gave Himself for us, and from the foundation of the world. Through all the long ages, even in times of the vilest human perversity, there never was a day when Christ was not crucified for us. This He did because He understood the terrible pos-

sibilities and certainties of sin; and something of this we can do for our pupils. We can see what their folly will bring to them, how this bad temper or this bad habit will result in the loss of friends and health and peace and prosperity and heaven itself; and the pity that we shall come to feel will be very close to love and will lead us to it.

Yes, and Christ loves us not only because He realizes our evil possibilities, but because He sees also our possibilities for good. He knows that He formed us in His image, and He longs to have us once more like Himself. He is lonely without us. And so the more we have Christ formed in us the more we shall see what graces and what joys are possible for all others. We shall sympathize the more with Christ's ideal for His children, and love in them the undeveloped and obscured image of His perfection.

And finally, Christ loves us because He has entered into our experiences, having been tempted in all points even as we are so sadly and constantly tempted. Surely this bond of love should unite us also with Christ's children. Whatever folly in them may tend to alienate our affection, we have only to look into our past lives and we shall see the same folly; we have only to look into our hearts and we shall see the possibility of it even now. Think what you yourself did once or said once to your own teacher or your father or mother. Ah, a good memory is necessary if one would be a good teacher!

III

AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PUPILS

You will make no progress in love for your pupils if you do not understand them. It is often said, "Mrs. So-and-so is a success at raising flowers because she loves them so much." But watch Mrs. So-and-so and you will see that she knows just what kind of soil each plant prefers, just how much sunshine or shade or water or heat to give each plant, just how to prune the plants and keep off the insects. She loves flowers, to be sure; but because she loves them she has taken pains to understand them. Many love flowers as much as she does, but are too lazy or stupid to raise them. And many love children, but will not take pains to understand them, and therefore make failures of their Sunday-school teaching.

Would that we might understand children as easily as flowers! But those flowerlike beings are endlessly complex. This minute the child will be a little angel, and the next a little imp. Now he is a marvel of keen wisdom, and soon he is unimaginably dense. To-day he is obstinate and rude; to-morrow he will be gentle and tractable. Especially at certain ages children are irritable and irresponsible, and the hapless teacher never knows whether his hour is to be a delight or a torment.

We have taken one important step toward understanding our pupils if we understand how complex and varying

is this nature of theirs. Do not expect in your children uniformity or consistency of conduct. Two natures within them are very plainly struggling for control. Later in life, this struggle will have been decided; or, if it still continues, it will be discreetly and respectably concealed. In childhood and youth, however, the contending forces are swaying backward and forward all over the field, and the issue of battle is distressingly uncertain. This condition, if the teacher really loves humanity, adds wondrous zest and incentive to his work. He is engaged in a grand warfare, and the prizes are infinitely precious.

Another aid in understanding children is to realize how short their life has been. Short as it is, they have learned wonderful things. The average child of the Intermediate Department has made acquisitions in language, motion, mental acumen and practical science, undoubtedly equal to all he is likely to acquire in all his later life. But this lore has been, in a way, forced upon him. Here every room has been a schoolroom, and every person and animal and thing has been an instructor. But figure up how many (rather, how few) hours of real instruction in the Bible your children have probably enjoyed thus far, and you will see that it is unreasonable to expect them to have learned much about the Scriptures or about religion. Most Sunday-school teachers quite fail to comprehend the density of their pupils' entirely excusable ignorance, and so shoot over their heads with their teaching, repeat too little and drill too seldom. Written work is of the greatest importance, and constant reviews, that the teacher may understand just where his pupils are mentally, and not try to teach them where they are not.

Again, you cannot understand a child without understanding his surroundings. Before they moved the Boston Art Museum to its present superb building, the site of it was occupied for many months solely by a tiny wooden structure whose purpose was a puzzle to most observers. In it an exceedingly careful series of investigations was made as to the light that fell from the sky at different times of day and in different seasons and upon different portions of the ground, for the little building was moved from place to place. Thus the architect was enabled to plan every room of the museum with full knowledge of how to place the windows for the best illumination of the objects to be exhibited there.

Such pains are taken with mummies and statues, and yet we Sunday-school teachers often attempt to plan and build the structure of an immortal character without once visiting the scene in which that character must have its chief development! We cannot understand our pupils without knowing what helps and hindrances they have at home. The growth of a plant depends largely upon its environment, nor is it otherwise with these human flowers.

You must go beneath the surface, if you would understand a child. Some that seem indifferent are feeling the most deeply. Some that appear careless are really experiencing the most concern. Some that are most mischievous and troublesome are actually yearning for the best life. Occasionally a child carries his heart on his sleeve, and his face is a clear window, disclosing what is going on within; but far more often you will find children shy of disclosing their noblest desires and finest impulses. The wise teacher will watch eagerly for revela-

tions of the true inner life of his pupils, and until he has seen it he will never be quite sure of the best-appearing of them, nor begin to be discouraged concerning the worst-appearing.

But the most important thing needing to be said on this subject is that, just as the pure in heart are they that see God, so it is they that alone can see and understand God's dear children. Quite in proportion as you are sincere will others be sincere with you. Your Christ-likeness will disclose whatever of Christlikeness is in the boys and girls, just as the musical vibrations of a finely attuned instrument draw out whatever possibility of musical vibrations exists in all the other objects in the room. And thus it is necessary above all for the Sunday-school teacher to understand himself, as a prerequisite to the understanding of his pupils.

IV

ARDENT INDUSTRY

"Ardent" means "burning." "Zealous" means "boiling." It was said of Christ, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." It was His meat and drink to work for God. We, His followers, also are told that it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing. We are commanded, by one who practised what he preached, to be fervent in spirit; and the literal Greek is "boiling in spirit." This is the true Sunday-school worker's type of industry. There must be nothing languid or lackadaisical about it.

Without this industry the love of Christ and of our pupils and the understanding of our pupils are all useless. Many teachers are really too lazy to teach, though they would be amazed and very indignant if they were told that. They read their Bibles and study the lessons and go to see their pupils in their homes and perhaps spend many hours a week on their Sunday-school work; but the spending of time is not industry. Perhaps they are very anxious for the success of their teaching, and long with great eagerness for their pupils' salvation; but anxiety and eagerness are not industry. Industry is work; ardent industry is work with all one's soul in it. The truly industrious teachers may spend in their work only half the time of other teachers, and yet get far more

out of the time they employ. They will be least anxious about their work, because there will be the least cause for anxiety.

Ardent industry will not postpone the lesson preparation. As soon as one lesson has been taught, preparation for the next will be begun. This beginning will be made without fail on Sunday afternoon or evening. Thus the teacher will be unhurried in his work, and unhurried work is always the best work, and the easiest. He will gain time on his side; he will have the immense advantage of unconscious cerebration, the under-current thinking that is so valuable; he will get many unexpected accretions of illustrations and facts from his reading and observation during the week. One hour on Sunday and ten minutes on each of the other days of the week make two hours in all. They are worth for lesson preparation far more than four hours spent on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning before school time.

Ardent industry puts the whole mind on the task. The wise teacher will have a place for his Sunday-school studying. He will have a Sunday-school corner of his home, where, on a shelf or a desk, he will arrange all his material, his books, maps, tablets, records, all the tools of his trade. He will at once get into the Sunday-school atmosphere when he goes to that corner. If possible, he will manage to be alone during his studying; at any rate, it will be understood that he is not to be interrupted by conversation. Absorption means growth, in the mind as in a plant. It is no more necessary to give time to the task than to give yourself wholly to the time.

Ardent industry, as already hinted, implies a mind that

is continually occupied with the task in a subconscious way. What is true physically is true mentally, that there should be a Sunday-school corner in the head, to which the teacher will turn instinctively, at night on the bed, or during times of waiting in the day, or on his walks to and fro. It is this brooding that makes a lesson really yours.

Ardent industry implies thoroughness of study. The teacher will read much; first, his Bible, in large portions, and all the parallel accounts; then, the commentaries, till it all is clear; then, as widely as the time permits, for illustrations and for methods of presentation. His reading will include the use of the Bible dictionary and the atlas and the Bible history. Different lessons will require different amounts of it, but he will not stop till the lesson is all clear and familiar.

Finally, this ardent industry will not be confined to the preparation of the lesson, but it will go on to gather up the results of the teaching, and reinforce them by visiting the pupils at their homes, having them come to your home, studying with them, taking them on pleasant excursions, writing letters to them, trying in every way to become a practical influence in their lives. Industry often fails because it is solitary. Teaching is a social process from beginning to end. We are to be workers *together* — not only with God, but with His dear children.

V

SHREWD INGENUITY

Industry and ingenuity are alike in their first syllables, and many confound the two; but an ounce of ingenuity outweighs a ton of plodding. Children are bright, and value brightness. They are ever fresh and enterprising, and they like new ways. Ruts and routine may suit the conservative elders, but a monotonous groove is abhorrent to a child. A new way, though no better than an old way, is better with children just because it is new.

And so the wise teacher will consider every element, every step, in the teaching process, and try endlessly to better it. For example, to take the very first element, how does he begin the lessons? The introduction is half of the pedagogical battle. The first minute is one-half of the whole forty minutes. It should grip attention, sound the keynote, invite, attract. And yet how few teachers plan for it! The introduction to each lesson should usually be different from that of the last lesson. Now it will be a pointed anecdote, now a strong question, now a startling statement. Again, it will be a picture held up before the class, or a sketch map drawn on a slate, or a diagram which the pupils will be set to copying. It may be a vivid word picture. It may be a single sentence which the teacher will read impressively three times. It may be the key verse of the lesson which the class will

read in concert. There is room right at the outset for shrewd ingenuity, and it will pay.

The teaching process proceeds by the use of questions. Here planned variety and brightness are most essential. Sometimes we may use the questions in the quarterly. Sometimes we may dictate a set of questions to the class a week in advance. Sometimes we may hold in our hand a lot of questions written on separate strips of cardboard, which the pupils will draw in turn, read aloud, and answer or let their neighbors answer, each pupil retaining the slip he answers and striving to get the most slips. For variety, each pupil, after reading aloud the question he draws, instead of answering it himself may call on some other pupil to answer it. Again, all the question slips may be laid on the table, face down, and the pupils will pick them up in turn and answer them if they can. Again, the class will be divided, a week in advance, into two sides, which will meet and prepare sets of questions to fire at each other on Sunday, and see which side can answer the largest number of its opponents' questions correctly. I know of no phase of the teaching process that better repays ingenuity than this of questioning.

The use of maps is essential for good teaching, and here also we need the most thoughtful brightness. It is not enough simply to point to a map on the wall. Often get the pupils to make their own maps, copying a simple outline map which you will set before them. Sometimes you will draw the map in their presence, requiring them to name each feature as you add it to the map. Sometimes you will mount the outline map on a board and have the pupils stick pins in different places (unnamed, of

course), as you call for them. They will carry a string along from pin to pin to represent a journey of some character whom they are studying. Sometimes you will use a printed map, having the pupils attach adhesive stars to the places visited by the lesson hero, or follow his course by a series of paper pennants stuck into the map.

Ingenuity is needed, too, in the use of the Bible in the class: sometimes the Scripture passage read straight through; sometimes a verse read in silence and then a questioning upon it and then another verse in silence; sometimes the verses pasted on a series of cards which are distributed, and then a question to be answered by the pupil that holds the appropriate verse, and then another question.

Ingenuity may be used in the important matter of getting home study: now by special assignments of work to each pupil; now by calling on all to write condensations of the lesson story in twenty-five words; now by asking for written paraphrases; again by setting the pupils to writing two-minute essays; by giving out two or three research topics for the pupils to look up; by postal-card requests for certain sorts of study sent to their homes; by a study social held at the home of the teacher.

It is not always *your* ingenuity that is needed; it is quite as valuable to appreciate and use the ingenuity of another. Be quick to take hints. Observe, and listen, and read. But originate all you can, and *never* say, "I am not original," until you have faithfully and persistently tried to be. Most originality is simply clear insight into a need, and then hard, persevering thought and labor. Most lack of ingeniousness is lack of energy.

VI

THE MAGIC OF TACT

"Tact" and "contact" are sister words. Tact is really touching lives. Education and isolation are impossible together. The familiar saying that Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a pupil at the other end would constitute a university is wrong in an important particular: both should be at the middle of the log! There is no tact without contact, and a teacher must get close to his pupils if he would get an influence over them.

A distant manner is fatal to success in teaching, because it renders impossible this contact which is the basis of tact. I have a friend whose oft-repeated injunction is, "Get chummy with folks." I should like to write those words on the heart of every Sunday-school teacher in the world. As the teacher sits down with his class he should have the jolly, pleased air which says that he is at last in the one place where he has most wanted to be for a week. Is he to pretend what he does not feel? Yes, because he will soon come to feel it! There must be no "letting one's self down," in this chumminess. Tact implies that you actually live on the children's level of interests and feelings. Remember what Christ said are the conditions of entrance into His kingdom, and you will perceive that their level may even be above your own.

A dictatorial air, the air of the pedagogue and school-

ma'am, destroys the possibility of tact. It puts you at once in a position of authority, over the children and not on their level. Such a manner constitutes you not their friend but their boss, and children — as well as grown-ups — hate to be bossed. The wise teacher will know how to substitute for the dictatorial air an air of invitation, precisely as if he were calling the class to join him in a happy game or delightful excursion.

That last suggestion goes to the heart of the matter. You will succeed just in proportion as your pupils come to want to go to Sunday school, want to read and study the Bible. Tact — contact — is like electricity. It is an enjoyment, flowing from you to them and welding the class and the teacher together in a common ardor.

From all this it follows that a direct command is the last resource a teacher should employ. At once it places a barrier between him and his pupils. If he has not aroused their desire, let him appeal next to their sense of reasonableness. "If you were teacher in my place, and if you had spent three hours in preparing to teach, and then the pupils paid no attention to you, how would you feel? and what would you do?" Such an appeal does not break contact, but rather strengthens it.

And, of course, it follows from these considerations that tact is impossible when one is angry. It is a good teaching rule never to rebuke a pupil until one can do it in complete forgetfulness of self and in the spirit of love. Almost any offense that is not disturbing the rest of the school can wait for your right mood. If you do not wait, you will have two errors to correct, yours, and theirs still.

My subject is "The Magic of Tact"; and tact is indeed magical. If you have it, you can do what you will. Your pupils will study for you, listen to you, try to please you. All things are possible to love, and tact is love in action.

Therefore you can get tact only by getting outside yourself, into the realm of love. Put yourself in their place. Try to imagine what your pupils would admire and love in a teacher — not nagging and frowns on the one side, not weakness and laxness on the other side, but firmness, sweetness, reasonableness, brightness and sympathy. And it is certain that as by this loving imagination you get into their lives and put yourself in their place you will get into contact with them, and will exercise the magic of tact.

VII

ABSOLUTELY ENDLESS PATIENCE

The word "patience" comes from the Latin word meaning to suffer. Patience is long-suffering. Surely it is a good word to apply to some of our Sunday-school classes! "Passive" comes from the same Latin root, but patience is not necessarily a passive virtue. Patience may co-exist with the most energetic effort to better conditions; indeed, such work adds much to patience. We can endure far better the shortcomings of our pupils if there is hope of improvement through wise plans and steady action. Weak submission to poor work and faulty character is very far from patience, yet it is as near as many teachers come to it.

There is much in Sunday-school teaching that calls for patience, especially in intermediate classes. There is much carelessness, indifference, ingratitude, even impudence. The pupils forget their lesson quarterlies, they will not study at home, they whisper and fidget and cut up all kinds of pranks. They are often inattentive and fretful and impolite. When rebuked, they sulk or fly into a passion. Indeed, I know of no position so trying as that of a Sunday-school teacher with unruly pupils. In the home we have each one to ourselves, but in the class the wrongdoing is massed and impetuous. In the public school we have authority; discipline is expected by both

pupil and parent. In the Sunday school we hate to spoil the effect of our teaching by scolding, or lose control of the pupils by sending them home, or waste the few precious minutes in discipline.

Our patience will be helped by discovering and remembering all palliatory circumstances. This pupil was up late at a party the night before. This other pupil is half sick. The room is too cold or too hot. A class near by is making too much noise. The lesson is too mature for them. Their home influences are bad or negative. They are at the nervous age. The room needs ventilation. The disturbance spreads from only one pupil in the class. Some of these causes of the trouble are apparent, and should be remembered. Remember, too, that there may be many causes that are not apparent, such as poor food, indigestion, a toothache or a headache. When these foes assail you at home, are you always angelic? Imagine such ailments as at the bottom of much of the disorder in your class. Often you will be right in your conjecture, and even when you are wrong the conjecture will be an aid to your patience.

"Love suffereth long, and is kind." What better motto for a teacher than this? We are patient with those we love, but we cannot well be patient with those we just endure. Every pupil has his lovable side, however mischievous or ugly he may be. Find it. Such a child may be discovered to have been simply starving for love, and nothing else the matter.

"Absolutely endless patience" is my theme; and patience is valueless unless it is endless. One lapse of patience may undo months of long-suffering. The pupils

will take your moment's harshness as an index of your true self, and will fear and distrust you henceforth. A manufacturer works up a reputation for his goods by sending them forth unvarying in quality, and only by unvarying, endless patience can you gain with your pupils a reputation for patience and love.

Therefore if you feel impatient that is just the time when you should by no means punish or scold or even rebuke. Better let the recitation be spoiled by the pupil than by you and the pupil. If you are patient under manifest provocation, other pupils will take your part against the disturber; but if you are cross, you will alienate sympathy from yourself and turn it to the wrongdoer.

Christ is our perfect model of patience. He could say, "Woe unto you," but more in sorrow than in anger. He could use the whip, but plainly for His Father and His Father's house. For Himself, when He was reviled, there was no answer. When He was crucified, His only word was, "Father, forgive them." For love, He endured the cross. "Looking unto Jesus" we may run with patience the race that is set before us. If we have His spirit of love, we shall gladly endure all the crosses of our difficult calling, ready to bear all things if we may in the end win a single soul.

VIII

THE BLESSED SENSE OF HUMOR

What is a sense of humor? It is the ability to see the funny side of a situation, if it has any. It is the ability at any rate to regard it light-heartedly, even if it has no funny side. It is a real part of that joy of the Lord which is our strength, a joy into which we are to enter without waiting for the judgment day. It is not a pretense that what is not there is there, that things are different from what they are. It is clear-eyed, but it is happy-hearted. It is not invincible optimism, but it is invincible cheer.

This sense of humor is vastly helpful in all work, but especially in teaching. In the first place, child life is a large fount of humor, albeit that humor is generally unconscious. Children keep the funny columns of our papers filled with the only original jokes since the days of the Chaldæans! They are our natural humorists, and the rest are painfully artificial. It will greatly lighten our teaching labors if we can appreciate and gloat over the funny answers and comical remarks that are constantly enlivening our classes.

And besides, this sense of humor is especially helpful in teaching because the teacher's work, especially the Sunday-school teacher's work, is so full of discouragements; we try to do so much with so little — so little time and

study and often with so little appreciation — that we need all the alleviation we can muster.

These little men and women themselves are an unfailing spring of laughter to any healthy soul. Their airs, so comically aping their elders; their self-importance, so like what the angels must see in us; their tragedies, which are comedies to us, just as our present tragedies will seem comic to us some day — who can look on a child without tender amusement, as if seeing himself in a foreshortening mirror? Looking upon them thus, you will laugh at their tantrums and their follies, but it will be more a ridiculing of your own.

Then a sense of humor bridges over the dark places in our work with remembered shafts of light. How swiftly the children flash from angel to imp and back again! Remember the rapid transformations of "Helen's Babies"— a book, by the way, that every teacher would profit by reading. In that very suddenness of change is something comic, like the turning of White Dinah into Black Dinah. If you can remember the angel it will greatly help you with the imp.

The play faculty is a part of the sense of humor. No teacher can get along well with children unless he carries the play spirit into his task. His work must be a delight to him, and then there is some chance that it will become a delight to them. The game element will be introduced into all good teaching. It may be a set of questions written on slips of paper and held mysteriously in the teacher's hand for the pupils to draw therefrom. It may be similar question slips face downward on the table, for the pupils to select them one by one, turn them

up and answer them. It may be a question tournament, conducted like a spelling-match. Whatever device you adopt, continually changing the method, a contest, a struggle, a possible victory must enter into all effort and achievement. The ideal teaching evokes for the class the same zest as for the playground. Why not? Is it not thus with genuine scholars among the elders? and are we not seeking to make such scholars out of the children?

If you lack the play sense, you can get it — by playing; there is no other way. An over-working man makes a poor teacher, and so does an under-playing man. If you lack this play sense, the realization of it is quite as necessary for your secular work as for your Sunday-school teaching. To remedy the lack will take time, but it will pay richly.

The sense of humor is close also to the faculty of imagination. It enables the teacher to put himself in the child's place. It enables one also to put one's self into the future, and from that happy vantage ground to look back and find one's worries all forgotten, and see the children grown up, wise, good, useful, and grateful. It contrasts the present with this future, and laughs merrily and hopefully.

The sense of humor is close also to the faculty of memory. The wise teacher will cherish in memory all the bright and cheery passages in his teaching, all the funny happenings and sayings, all the hints of appreciation from parents and pupils. It is a good plan to write them down in a little Encouragement Book by themselves, and to review them often.

Did Christ ever laugh? Of course He did. There is

no record of it, because no record is needed. His tears are recorded, because they were unusual — though what reasons for weeping He had! But He loved children and drew them to Himself, and so He must have had a sense of humor. And by it, as I like to think, even the great Teacher was supported and consoled.

IX

THE BULLDOG GRIP

Oliver Wendell Holmes gives us our keynote in his stirring words, that have been a help to me many times in my teaching:

> Be firm; one constant element of luck
> Is genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck.
> Stick to your aim: the mongrel's hold will slip,
> But only crowbars loose the bulldog's grip;
> Small though he looks, the jaw that never yields
> Drags down the bellowing monarch of the fields!

A similar inspiration from literature has been that bulldog scene from which "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" gained his stimulus to a dogged determination. Very often, at the thought of these passages from Holmes and Eggleston, I have shut my teeth hard, taken a new grip of my teaching task, and made up my mind never to let go till victory was mine.

Often, when you cannot reason yourself into success, or even pray yourself into success, when you have done the best you knew and have failed, when love for your pupils has passed into dread and dislike, when tact and patience have flown to the winds, all that is left is to hold on, and holding on may bring success.

Young people, with their own vim and courage, recog-

nize grit in others, and value it. If you but bear with fortitude their manifest wrongdoing, many of them will come over to your side against the wrongdoers, and thus by dividing them you will conquer them.

Dogged determination, absolute refusal to admit defeat, positive decision to hold on forever, steadies the nerves and gives at once the air of victory. This is not to hocus yourself with the pretense that you have succeeded, but to comfort yourself (using "comfort" in the old sense of to strengthen) with the confidence that you will succeed. Boys and girls are quick to recognize the calm, take-it-or-leave-it-but-you'll-be-sorry-if-you-leave-it tone of one who is sure of his ground.

There is an element of indignation in the bulldog grip. It does not hurt a teacher to entertain a little righteous wrath over a pupil's sloth or obstinacy or impudence or sulkiness. Only there is a vast difference between being righteously indignant and being mad. Righteous indignation is akin to Christ's whip of cords. It is the father's sternness on occasion because there is no other way for the father's love to train an object for itself. It is safe — note this well — if it is impersonal.

There is an element of prayer in the bulldog grip. It lays hold of God's strength as Jacob laid hold of the wrestling angel. It asserts grimly and triumphantly, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." It says with Emerson:

> So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, "Thou must,"
> The youth replies, "I can."

First be certain that your will is in God's hands, that you are engaged in God's work, that your preparation is controlled by Him, and then you may know that you have His almightiness back of you; you may seize it with the electric grip that welds.

Did you ever read Shepard's energizing book, "Before an Audience"? If you have read it, you will remember how he insists upon a speaker's being at what he calls "electric tension." The will of the teacher, as well as that of the speaker, must be like an overflowing reservoir, fairly sweeping away all opposition of his listeners. Expect obedience, and you will get it. How readily we follow those that are in the habit of leading! What attention we give to those that customarily command attention! Teachers, like all others, are usually taken at their evident, quiet self-estimation. If, however, on the contrary, you are plainly not confident, but distressed, pleading, hesitant, you will get from your little audience just what you expect.

Bodily health is important for this bulldog grip. Flabby muscles furnish a poor basis for mental tension, and racked nerves for spiritual firmness. If possible, take a brisk walk before you go to your class. Present yourself before them glowing with physical energy, and you will quite surely find that mental energy will accompany it. And if with this outdoor walk you also have such a walk with God as Enoch had, if you gain the calm assurance of contact with eternal forces, if you feel yourself to be but their channel as they flow through you to your class, you will ally yourself with the majestic confidence of Jehovah, and, with Him, you must prevail.

X

THE BOOK IN THE HEART

It is impossible to exaggerate the value of a love for the Bible if one is to be a successful Sunday-school teacher. No head knowledge will take its place, no enthusiasm for literature, history, or antiquarian lore. Most of this is beyond your pupils, anyway, but love of the Bible is not. If with all your teaching you teach that, you have planted a self-growing seed. If you merely give your pupils information, you have contributed to the soil of their minds fertilizers, perhaps, but certainly not vital germs.

"The Book in the Heart" means quite literally, in the first place, much of the Bible committed to memory. A Sunday-school teacher should be able to quote freely the great Bible passages and single verses, giving the chapter and verse. One never can tell when this will be needed. Our work is like that of the physician, who surely cannot take time by the bedside of his patient to study his medical library.

And this memorizing should be more than personal: we must stimulate our pupils to commit the Bible to memory. Aim to illustrate every lesson by the whole Bible. If you have your friends in your heart, you can talk by the hour about their characteristics, relating their deeds and quoting their sayings. So also will it be if you

carry in your heart Abraham and Moses, David and John, Paul and Christ.

The heart is the center of life. Urging that we put the book in our hearts is the same as insisting that it must be in our lives. It cannot govern your imagination and affection without governing your action. The Sunday-school teacher that does not live a Bible life cannot be a Bible teacher. Many teach the history of the Jews, but not the history of God's people; that wonderful phrase, "God's people," has so little meaning for them. Many inspire in their pupils an appreciation of the fine literary excellence of the Psalms, yet cannot implant in their lives a single line like "O how love I thy law!" But if the Word is a lamp to your feet you can set it on a lamp-stand, that it may give light to all the members of your class.

"Heart" suggests "hearty." "Cordial" is Latin for the same. The Bible in the heart insures warm and enthusiastic teaching of the Bible. A Bible-lover has the zest that every lover has. "All the world loves a lover" — any kind of lover, and not the least a lover of the Book. If a teacher shows plainly that he enjoys the study of the Bible, it will not be long before his pupils will want to enter into his joy.

What you know "by heart" you are at home in teaching. The Sunday-school teacher should leave no unexplored corners of the Book. We should be familiar with each of the sixty-six rooms of the King's palace. If there is one unlocked door, the room back of it may contain the rarest treasure of all, the greatest help for your teaching. Be sure that no Bible knowledge will come

amiss, and that the more you know about the blessed volume, the more you will love it.

The Bible can get into the heart only through much study and earnest meditation, continued through a long time. That is why the Bible emphasizes meditation upon the thoughts of God "in the night-watches"— because the Bible thinking that means the most is the unforced, voluntary, instinctive turning to the Book. Our minds must be upon the Bible as we take our walks, as we talk with our friends, as we wait for trains. We must carry the book with us, not only in our well-stocked memories, but also in our pockets. One after the other, take the Bible characters and events and make them essential portions of your lives. Above all, follow this course with the scenes and sayings of the current lessons.

And if the Bible is thus in our hearts, our reverence for it will become quite apparent in our lives. It was worth a whole course of doctrinal sermons just to hear an aged clergyman of my acquaintance speak of "our precious Redeemer." I can still feel the vibrations of awe and affection that pulsed through the words, "our Saviour," as spoken in public prayer by Dr. George M. Adams, the commentator. For more than thirty years there has rung in my mind the majestic utterance of Doctor Moorehead as before a great audience he spoke of "this massive volume." I was greatly moved once as an artist friend told me of rescuing a Bible from a dirty bookstall, where it was flung in among tattered volumes, and of her habit never to lay any other book or article on top of a Bible. Such reverence will be disclosed by the very way you handle the Bible. Moreover, it is con-

tagious; and if the love of the Bible is thus strongly in your heart, be sure that erelong it will be a living joy in the hearts of your pupils.

XI

THE HEAVENLY PARTNER

I sometimes think that I should like to take a partner in my Sunday-school teaching. I often long for council and comfort and encouragement and all sorts of help. It would be good if I had some one to take my place now and then, and reach the pupils whom I am not succeeding in reaching, and inaugurate new plans, and show me how to be more effective. It would be the new broom that sweeps clean, and when I took my place again, I in turn would perhaps have the force of a new broom. I might teach part of a quarter and my partner the other part; or, we might alternate Sundays; or, each might teach a certain part of every lesson, and the one keep order while the other talked! Dr. Peloubet once tried this plan of teaching in partnership, and it worked fairly well.

But however a human partnership might work, every one of us may do infinitely better that that: every one of us may have a divine partnership. This thought is familiar to all of us, so familiar that it has become meaningless. We cannot do better for our teaching than make this thought vivid and full of meaning.

What if the Lord Jesus should come into the Sunday-school room just before the pupils assemble, and as you

are laying out books and maps and the rest of your teaching outfit, and should sit down opposite you in a chair, and quietly say, "Do you know me, Miss Jones?"

He would have no long hair, He would be dressed in modern clothes; in outward appearance, as you look hastily, He would be no different from the superintendent; but something in His eyes, his face, burns like a fire into your very soul. You do not dare to answer, or to say a word. It is not because you are afraid — you would as soon think of being afraid of your own brother; but it seems a possibility too great to put into words; rather, it seems impossible.

But He answers your thoughts — as was always His wont, you will remember — and He says: "Yes, I am He, and I have come to help you teach. We have a few minutes. Just tell me how you planned to start this lesson."

Then you go over your plans step by step, and He listens, so pleased and eager that your plans brighten in the telling; and at every step He puts in just the suggestion needed to complete them and make them so that they must work. Every teacher knows what that means — the one little final touch that insures success, and without it success is, oh! so problematical.

As the children come in, He remains in the pupils' seats. He gives each a cheery nod: "Well, Helen, it's good to see your bright smile." "Eva, you know me, don't you? Can't guess? I know you, dear child." "Mary, how is that blessed mother of yours to-day? Tell her some one is coming to see her this afternoon; some one with Home News; she'll understand."

And how quiet the children are, but how happy! Each wants to sit next to Him. He is like a big brother to them all. Even the worst girl in the class cannot keep her eyes off Him. Suddenly they fill with tears, for she has noticed a scar in the center of His hand.

And how finely the lesson goes! How well you make your points, and how the visitor adds the touches of story and question and application needed to drive them home! How well the children listen! How prompt and thoughtful their replies! And as you and the visitor linger afterwards, the worst pupil of the class comes up to say to you, almost in a whisper: "I should like to be His girl, and do just what He wants me to always. I did not know before that He was like that."

Does all this seem too realistic? It is not half so real as the actuality may be. Let your imagination loose. Fancy all the help an all-wise and all-loving and all-powerful assistant might be to you. Put Him beside you in this and that emergency of your teaching. It will all be beneath the blessed possible reality. Our teaching is lonely and distressed and ineffective only because we do not realize and use this partnership.

Sometimes in an earthly partnership one partner does it all; the other is what is aptly called a "silent partner." He may be silent from choice or from compulsion. Sometimes he gives only his money to the business, or only his name; or, he may have retired altogether from active service.

But what if a young business man has for his partner a multimillionaire, who knows all about the business, and has made in it the greatest success of the world's his-

tory, and is still in the prime of life and power, *but the young business man makes him a silent partner?*

Is not that what we Sunday-school teachers do too sadly often with the Lord Jesus Christ?

XII

THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH

The uncertainty of the teaching process is one of the chief hardships of the teacher. He never knows whether his lesson will "go well" or not, whether or not it will get hold of the pupil. Often, after the most careful preparation, he goes home with a headache, feeling that it is all useless, and that he has made a perfect failure. What teacher does not long for the certainties of the arts and of the exact sciences, where causes produce effects and effects are exactly proportioned to causes? — so much coal, then just so much electricity, or just so many revolutions of the engine? But in our work it seems all chance, all a matter of good luck or bad luck.

Now this distressing doubt and vagueness is unnecessary. It is to be obviated by faith — faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, which is the certainty of religion, which makes an exact science of these things of the Spirit. Faith shows and proves that nothing is in vain which we do for God. It is not so with our secular affairs. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." But it is different with our spiritual seed-sowing: "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it," though "after many days." To be

sure, some good seed is eaten by the birds, or withered by the heat, or choked by the thorns; but enough is sure to spring up to give us a good harvest. "And I," said Christ, "if I be lifted up from the earth, *will draw all men* unto myself." This He said at what a disadvantage of probability, yet with what confidence! Thus if a teacher takes up his cross and follows Christ, he is certain to draw souls to Him.

For this assurance of faith the teacher must get second sight, he must learn to see into the future. By his own past let him read the coming years of his pupils. How little he thought of his childhood teachers at that time, and how much he thinks of them now! How little attention he then paid to what they said, and how now it all comes back to him! Thus will it be with his pupils in their turn.

For this assurance of faith the teacher must get clairvoyance and see beneath the surface. He must find evidence of things not seen in a mere word or a softened look, or even without any exterior token at all. The changes you long to see will be mainly beneath the surface, and to be seen only by the eye of faith. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Do not expect outward manifestations, conditioning your faith upon them.

But, whether you see results or not, be sure that causes produce results in all parts of God's creation. Be sure that Bible truths will not return to you void. Read widely, and learn what these Bible truths have accomplished all over the world, on mission fields, in evangelistic campaigns, in the slums, over and over, with learned and ignorant, with old and young, with how many mil-

lions! And are the members of your class the only exceptions to their sway? Trust the Word. Trust the Spirit. Trust God's unvarying laws.

But the child's will is free to reject or accept? Yes; and in spite of all your words and prayers and wisdom and love, and that of their parents and pastor and friends, some may reject the truth and go down into the eternal death. God will not force Himself on any soul, and thus reduce it to a no-soul, a thing. There is this awful possibility. But how few such results, with a faithful teacher! They are so few that we need not consider them for the marring of our assurance of faith. Even though some do stray, and seem for a time to be lost, in how many cases has memory of the blessed Bible truths reached about them the soft, firm arms of God's love, and drawn them back to safety and to Him!

So this is the climax and the crown of the twelve essentials for Sunday-school teaching. All the rest center upon it, flower into it. We cannot get this faith in our work at first and without experience. At the start we must take it on the testimony of older workers. But as we go on using these tools of which I have written, as we labor on in love of Christ, in love and understanding of our pupils, with industry and ingenuity, with tact and patience, with cheer and persistence, with the Bible in our heart and the heavenly Partner by our side, our faith and confidence will be growing all the time, firmly founded on what we shall see of the wondrous power of the Spirit. May God grant us in the end the full reward of faith as we meet every one of our pupils in our eternal home!

XIII

PICTORIAL TEACHING

Those that use in the teaching process only the ears of their scholars, and not their eyes, are half-way teachers. They get only half of the possible results. From our earliest days we are learning all the time through both these royal avenues; why not use them both, to the full, in teaching the truth of God?

Many teachers hesitate to use the blackboard, or any method that includes drawing, because of fancied inability. "I am no artist," they say, as if that settled it. But did you ever note the kind of drawing that children do in their play, the kind that evidently interests them vastly there? It is crudest of the crude, mere dots and curves and wriggly lines; yet such drawings please them better, and are more meaningful to them than Raphael's cartoons or Doré's or Tissot's Bible. And cannot you do as well?

The truth is that few teachers realize how much they can trust to the glorious imagination of the child; and no teacher can realize this, or enter into the experience fully and splendidly, except in proportion as he also gets an imagination as fresh and active as the child's! Having it, a straight line becomes at once either Pharaoh or Solomon or Daniel or Paul, as the need requires, and a wriggle becomes the waves of the Red Sea or the Sea of

Galilee, or the Mediterranean with Jonah's whale just gone down.

The lack of a blackboard is accepted by most teachers as sufficient reason for failure to use this means of instruction; but a pencil tablet, in the hands of the child himself, would be counted by him quite as good as a blackboard, perhaps better; why not also in the hands of the teacher? You will need a very soft pencil or crayon, and a variety of colors; but with these, especially in a small class, a pencil tablet answers excellently. One great advantage of the tablet is that each scholar can have one, and can make his own drawing from yours as you draw, taking the result home as a souvenir, to store up for review day.

But a portable blackboard is inexpensive, and may be quickly set up anywhere, even in a church pew; and in some ways it is better than a pencil tablet. One decided advantage is that you can rub out your drawing here and there, putting your pictorial personages in new situations and relations as the lesson story proceeds. If the scholars are provided with book-slates, soft slate pencils, and sponges, they may follow you in this operation, which will serve to bring the process of events more swiftly before them than if they and you were obliged to draw a new scene each time in a series of pictures.

Let me emphasize the value of color in this work. It affords the easiest and clearest mode of differentiating the characters of your pictorial drama. If a red line is made for Christ, it will represent Christ in a year of lessons, and in the greatest variety of situations — simply a red line. Thus a blue line will stand for Paul all

through the Acts, and no more will be needed. It is not high art, but it is high imagination, which is no small part of high art.

It is much better, by the way, not to use symbols for persons, such as a cross to represent Christ or a shepherd's crook to represent David. Children do not think in symbols; does any one, for that matter? Simple straight and curved lines and simple dots and colors are better than all the stars and hearts and crosses that constitute the stock in trade of many an expert "blackboardist."

I must make one exception. It will sometimes be found that symbols are useful to set forth, not persons, but ideas. For example, it will add interest to the lesson on the Ten Commandments, perhaps, if you associate each commandment with a flower — that regarding worship with the sunflower because it follows the sun; that regarding contentment with the violet; that regarding the Sabbath, the queen of days, with the rose, the queen of flowers; that regarding purity with the lily; that regarding profanity with tulips; that regarding killing with the bleeding-heart; that regarding parents with everlasting; that regarding theft with the old-fashioned flower called honesty, and so on. The actual flowers could be shown, or the children could bring pictures cut from florists' catalogues. Each child could print the commandments on cardboard, and mount the flower pictures alongside.

Whatever mode of pictorial teaching you employ, you will fail largely of results unless you have the children copy your work. This copying serves a double purpose:

it keeps them attentive, and what they themselves do they will remember far better than what they merely see some one else doing. Indeed, it is better that the teacher should be as inexpert as the children, unless he can impart his expertness to the children. Skillful blackboard artists are very seldom effective Sunday-school teachers. They are interesting; but they lecture, they do not teach. It is a first essential that what you draw, the children shall be able in some fair sort to copy.

To this end it is well to give the scholars at the beginning of each quarter or connected series of lessons little blank books which they are to make pictorial summaries of the work. The books may be brought to the class, and the drawings may be made in them there, or the scholars at home may transfer to them the copy they have brought from school. Still another way is to make the class drawings on uniform sheets, which may afterwards be bound together. The results should have a place in the school's annual exhibition of its work, the young artists being at hand to explain.

Let me illustrate the kind of "drawings" with which I should begin by the example of the prodigal son. Set forth the parable in a series of squares. First scene: a simply outlined house front, two piles of money (little yellow circles), the father (a blue line) at the door, the prodigal (a red line) at the gate, the elder son (a green line — jealousy!) under a tree. Second scene: the prodigal (red line) surrounded by evil friends (yellow lines), and a pile of only two or three coins. Third scene: the swine (horizontal lines), the prodigal (red line bent over as in sorrow), the husks (green dots), no coins left.

Fourth scene: the prodigal going home (red line leaning forward), the father hurrying to meet him (blue line leaning toward the red one). Fifth scene: the house front again, the ring (yellow circle), the fatted calf (brown oval), the prodigal and his father (red and blue lines side by side), the rejoicing party (brightly colored lines at different angles, as if dancing), the elder son (a green line under a tree). Simple enough; you certainly could do that. But too simple for the children's interest? Try it and see.

In the same simple way you may draw (and have the children draw) pictorial maps. For example, build up the map of the Sea of Galilee. At the northern end, wavy lines, a brown oval, and a red upright upon a wavy line, will represent the walking on the sea. Near by, a similar outline will picture the stilling of the tempest. On the eastern shore two circles and five little strokes will stand for the feeding of the five thousand. Below it, a series of circles will be the swine tumbling into the sea. On the western side, many little lines in the water will represent the wonderful catch of fish. An inverted V will represent the hill where was preached the Sermon on the Mount. Thus you may construct a pictorial map of all Palestine, or of Jerusalem, or of Paul's journeys, or of Joseph's journey to Egypt and his life there, or of the movements of Moses and the Israelites. And all of this, of course, is to be copied, step by step, by the scholars.

I have known fine results produced by the use of paper dolls in Bible teaching The dolls may be figures cut

from fashion magazines. Tissue paper, gilt paper, and sheets of colored paper, will furnish all the needed costumes and scenery. A blank book may be made into a doll-house, each page representing some room or other scene in the story to be depicted. Thus, for example, the various episodes in the tale of Esther may be set forth. Such work sends the children to the Bible itself, and sets them to asking all kinds of valuable questions. Soon they become as familiar with the Bible stories they have acted out with their paper puppets as with the stories they made up for themselves on the playground. And is not that a glorious gain?

But of course it is not wise, in our pictorial teaching, to go no further than teacher or scholars can go. Sometimes you may get an artist friend to draw an ideal scene or figure illustrating a lesson and show it to the class for their inspiration. Many of the world's greatest painters and sculptors have chosen Biblical subjects, and prints or photographs of their works may be obtained easily and cheaply. There are many books that are full of these reproductions or of accounts of the pictures — such books as Farrar's or French's "Christ in Art," Barton's "Jesus of Nazareth," Hurll's "The Bible Beautiful," and Jameson's "Sacred and Legendary Art." Almost every lesson may be illustrated in this fine way.

Most lessons, too, may be taught pictorially with the help of views of modern scenes, landscapes and customs, in Eastern lands. Stereoscopes and sets of stereoscopic pictures for use in this way are now to be obtained. A collection of Palestine views may be made, and hung on

the wall, with pictures by great artists illustrating the current lessons. If you have no class-room, you can fasten the pictures by clamps to the back of the pew.

If the pictures you obtain are black and white prints, it will add to the interest if you allow the children to take them home and color them. Let them be returned the next Sunday for comparison and for exhibition. Use them in the review. The children may be given blank books in which to paste these pictures, one to a page, with an account of each filling the page — all this for exhibition at the end of the year. Make it a rule that until a child has written the account of the last picture he is not to receive a new one.

The wise teacher will use a picture whenever he can in his teaching. If he is only telling an anecdote about Napoleon, he will show a portrait of him. Therefore, it is impossible for the teacher's collection of pictures to be too large. He will clip them from all sorts of periodicals, and he will keep them, neatly arranged, in labeled envelopes, a subject to an envelope, so that he can instantly put his hand on what he needs. The children also will be encouraged to form collections of Bible pictures, each with his Bible Gallery in his own home; and the class may take occasional tours among the homes of the members, to inspect these galleries.

What has been said of pictures applies also to models, and to all kinds of objects illustrative of our lessons. These also are highly useful in teaching through the eye, but they would require an essay by themselves.

Let me only remind you, in closing, that the aim of all this is not play, though the children may think it is. The

great aim of all picture teaching is to present the portrait of Christ, and make a vivid imprint of His truth upon the heart. If our pictorial teaching is merely to amuse, it does not deserve the high name of teaching, let alone the higher name of the teaching of religion.

XIV.

HOW TO USE OBJECTS IN TEACHING

A teacher that can draw, even fairly well, is twice a teacher. A teacher that knows how to use objects skillfully is four times a teacher.

We are dealing in our Sunday-school classes with the events of far-away times and countries, and often with abstract principles. When we introduce objects into our teaching, we strike at once a note of reality. Here is something substantial, and at once the lesson begins to assume solidity and convincingness.

Besides, objects are most valuable in gaining and holding attention. Take up something — anything — and hold it out before your scholars. Instantly every eye is fixed upon you, and every mind is intent. What is it? And what are you going to do with it? You have them fascinated, and it is your own fault if you do not win an entrance for the lesson truths through the gate you have thus opened.

In discussing object lessons, we must first lay down some negatives.

Do not use far-fetched or crude comparisons. For example, if the lesson deals with Christ's temptation in the wilderness, when you come to the high mountain from whose summit the adversary showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world do not think to illustrate it by heap-

ing up a pile of wooden blocks. That would only render the story trivial. On the other hand, those wooden blocks will come in beautifully when you show the possible formation of the "hanging gardens" of Babylon. Symbols of great mysteries must not be paltry. Lighted matches must not represent the Pentecostal tongues of flame. A stuffed dove must not attempt to picture the Holy Spirit, nor may you show by a blast from a bellows how Elijah's whirlwind blew upon Mount Horeb!

There is the danger, in the use of objects, that we shall confuse rather than explain. If the matter needs no explanation, our object teaching must be very simple and clear, or it will merely make an easy truth appear difficult. In such a case, the use of objects is merely for emphasis.

For example, all scholars know what is meant by paying attention, and understand that if they are not paying attention, they get no good from the teaching. What they need is to have that fact emphasized. You may do this by taking a bottle, still corked, and attempting to pour water into it; of course the water will run down on the outside. "Now," you may say to the class, "when you are not paying attention, your minds are stopped up, and all my teaching runs off and away; none of it gets into your head." They will all listen to that, and they will never forget it. You will spoil it, however, as soon as you begin to go into details, as by calling the cork "attention." The children will at once begin to inquire in their bright minds, "Are we *to take away* attention, then, before we can get the teaching into our heads?"

Or, you may wish to bring home to your scholars the folly of opening their minds to all sorts of pictures and books and papers and talk. "Your minds will be in a jumble," you will say; and they will understand you perfectly. But if you would emphasize the truth, bring out a camera, insert a plate, and take pictures of various incongruous objects upon it, one after the other, getting the scholars to imagine the medley that will result — Joe's head on top of the clock, with your bonnet on top of the whole!

Once more, you want to make the class realize how much more powerful for mischief is a temptation when the mind is prepared for it — by brooding over the sin, perhaps, and in other ways cultivating the desire. Take a bit of soft pine, with a thick end, and try to light it with a match; it will only char. Then split the end of the stick into a bunch of slivers and try your match again. It will immediately flash into flame. It has been prepared for the spark.

Such illustrations as these, sharp and quick, not tediously insisted upon and explained, will not confuse and will emphasize. Sparingly used, and with firm regard to one point alone, they are of great value.

Some teachers when they begin to practise object-teaching, seem to think that they have not done their duty by a lesson unless they have introduced some object to illustrate it, whether the lesson is adapted to that form of teaching or not. When, for example, you are teaching a parable, it is wretched pedagogy to illustrate it with another parable, either worded or in the form of an ob-

ject lesson. Save such aids for the vivifying and explaining of abstract truths.

If, for instance, you are teaching the beatitude, "Blessed are the meek," you may advantageously show the class a full head of wheat hanging over, as picturing the humility of those that really possess the most ability. But if you are teaching the parable of the Good Samaritan, you have in the parable itself all the illustration you need. To lug in, for example, an account of a traveling crane moving about the shop and picking up heavy burdens, would be worse than a work of supererogation.

Some teachers, also, seem to think that if one object lesson upon a theme is good, two object lessons upon the same theme will be twice as good; really, they are not half so helpful as one would be. For example, a good illustration of inattention is the failure to set the spring of the shutter in a camera, so that, no matter how much the bulb is squeezed, the plate is not exposed and no picture is made. But if you have already used the bottle-and-cork illustration which I have just mentioned, do not allow any delight over the discovery of the camera comparison to tempt you to indulge in it also. The two pictures would destroy each other.

The best objects for use in this kind of work are those most closely and naturally allied to your theme. Perhaps the lesson is on the Creation, and you have some skill in sleight-of-hand. It will be a temptation, maybe, to "palm" a ball, and fling it mysteriously into the air from seeming nowhere, to "show how" the planets were tossed out into space by the Almighty. But no! That

would be absurd and almost irreverent. A far better object lesson may be built upon a flower seed, laid beside a pot containing a grown plant of the same flower. Here is a bit of creation the children have seen in their own dooryards, and nature henceforth will have a new meaning to them, as being allied to those great and mysterious first days.

It is a good rule not to use as an illustration of an ancient deed a modern implement or object quite dissimilar to the ancient one. For example, if the lesson is on Jehoiakim and the destruction of Jeremiah's writings, you will convey a very false impression if you take to the class some recent octavo and hack it to pieces with a four-bladed pocket-knife.

I should teach the class to make for themselves a cabinet full of representations of various objects of use or ornament in Bible times. Take the following as a partial list: dolls dressed so as to exhibit Oriental costumes; paper dolls, with costumes painted from pictures; a sling; a flail; a harp; a chariot; a book roll; different forms of shields; a water skin; a table in the Roman form; a shepherd's staff; a fisher's boat and net; the model of an Eastern house, showing an "upper room"; a lamp; a loaf of bread; coins (pictures cut out, pasted upon pasteboard and gilded or otherwise colored); a ram's horn; artificial flowers and plants; models of the tabernacle and the temple, with their contents.

Some of these objects may be whittled from wood by the boys. Some may be molded from clay, putty, or chewing-gum. Some may be constructed of cloth, paper, or pasteboard. A little ingenuity will readily discover

materials and tools. Whatever object is made, let it be fashioned large enough to be seen over a good-sized room, and let it be made strongly enough to use over and over. Though you may think you will never again have need of a certain object, there is always a "next time" in the experience of a zealous and wide-awake teacher, and it is a sad waste of strength not to build for the future, when you can do it so easily and build up with so little trouble a fine collection of teaching aids.

It is a double advantage if you can interest your scholars in the making of these objects. You will thus attach them the more strongly to the class and to you, and you will find that these manual tasks will fix many a fact in their minds. Hold at your own home occasional class sociables solely for the purpose of providing some object or set of objects. An entire quarter, for example, might be spent in making a model of the tabernacle; and when it is done, your scholars will have learned something they can never forget.

The school should be making a collection of genuine articles from the Holy Land. In these days of much travel such a collection is easily started, and will rapidly increase. Pressed flowers, sandals, hand mills, costumes, photographs, grains, all sorts of interesting objects, will find their way thither, and the energetic use of the collection will add much to the sense of reality of the Scriptures.

The making of a relief map of Palestine is well within the possibilities of the average class. Large and accurate maps are easily obtainable as a basis, and such a Bible dictionary as Hastings's will furnish all necessary addi-

tional information. Glass over blue paint will represent the larger bodies of water, putty will build up magnificent mountains, little blocks of wood clustered together will represent towns and cities, masses of tiny evergreen twigs will be your forests, and a skillful use of the paint-brush will bring the whole into a workmanlike unity. You will be astonished to see how much of Bible geography and history you and your class will learn while constructing such a map, and how constantly you will use it after it is made.

For magnifying bits of the relief map, to render more vivid the details of certain lessons, a sand tray is very useful. The kindergarten and primary department should not be allowed a monopoly of this serviceable adjunct of teaching. With damp sand and ready fingers you can build up (or, better, have your scholars build up) the scene of Elijah's Carmel miracle, or the pool of Bethesda, or the Horns of Hattin, or the Gadara shore, or the Jericho road where the luckless traveler fell among thieves, or the Nile shore with its bulrushes, or the hills, plain, and brook where David met Goliath. Match ends make fine people, colored differently to represent soldiers, priests, apostles, women, and so forth. You can enact in your sandy theater all the stirring Bible events. The children's quick imagination will supply the details, and the little exercise will impart to the lessons a surprising vividness and picturesqueness.

It is well to plan far ahead for this use of objects in teaching. Some lessons will require much thought to find suitable objects for use. Some objects are hard to make or to find. If you look ahead and form your plans in ad-

vance, you will be astonished to see how much good material comes your way; but water flows only where there are hollows waiting to receive it.

In teaching do not expose the objects, but keep them hidden till you have reached the precise point at which they belong. Then introduce them impressively, with a little flourish, perhaps, as if bringing forward a treat. Indeed, the vivacity with which you make use of objects will contribute much to their effectiveness. All parts of teaching are more successful if you manifestly enjoy the work.

At the outset you may find it difficult to get ideas for object-teaching, and those that occur to you will not please you or seem effective. But persevere. Use your ideas, and more will come. Look for similitudes, and you will soon discover them. They leap everywhere upon the seeking mind. For example, writing this upon a railway train, I have just asked myself, "What Scripture truth would be especially hard to illustrate by an object lesson?" The atonement came to my thought. Then I looked out of the window to see an illustration of the atonement. At once a coal-yard came into view. To be sure! What is the coal but solidified sunlight, sunlight come down to earth, entered into a crude, dull, earthy form, giving itself a sacrifice for the lighting and heating of the world, and by that very sacrifice returning again to the air and sunshine from which it came! I have found in a block of coal a very fair illustration of the atoning work of Him who was the Sun of Righteousness, but who took upon Himself our earthiness and the blackness of our sin.

And finally, if after all proper search you fail to hit upon a suitable object lesson, never mind! You need not have an object lesson every time; it is quite as well not to. Emphasize the truth with a story, or a picture, or a poem, or some other device. The wise teacher always has more than one arrow in his quiver, more than one string for his bow.

XV

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SECULAR SCHOOL

I think that any one who, like the present writer, has taught in both Sunday schools and secular schools, can hardly fail to recognize how much helpfulness each might gain from the other. The purpose of this chapter is to put a few stitches in our pedagogical Sundays and Mondays, drawing them a little closer together.

It is the fashion, I know, to decry Sunday-school teaching and exalt secular teaching in comparison; but that is a foolish fashion. Let the teachers of our public schools be unpaid, divest them of all authority, and give them their scholars, with no previous study, for only half an hour a week, and we should see no better results than we get from our Sunday schools. Indeed, the results would be distinctly inferior, for the secular teachers would not be fired with the same unselfish zeal in teaching arithmetic for their weekly half-hour that moves the Sunday-school workers in teaching Christ.

This unpaid ardor goes far toward offsetting whatever advantages secular teachers may gain from their usually superior technical equipment. Certainly, though Sunday-school teachers have their scholars for so short a time, they are not less loved than secular teachers, and they have no less influence over their pupils.

Indeed, there is much that any secular teacher might

learn, to his great profit, from a study of the methods of any successful Sunday school; but the purpose of this chapter concerns only the Sunday-school teacher, and what he may gain from the secular schools.

I have just learned about a new departure in the Sunday school of Trinity Church, Boston — Phillips Brooks's church, as all men know. This school has set out to copy all the good points that may be copied from secular schools. It is to have regular courses, graded for different ages, and the scholars are to follow these courses and graduate. The history of the church and the biographies of great Christians will be studied, as well as the Bible. The year is to be divided into three terms, with a summer vacation. Prompt attendance is to be required, as in the public schools.

The experiment is certainly along right lines. It will impress the scholars, I am sure, with a new respect for the Sunday school. They will come to feel that it means business.

Consider the matter of discipline. No public school, not even the poorest, would tolerate the disorder to be found in almost the best Sunday schools. "But the public school teachers," I repeatedly hear it said, "have authority, and their scholars know it and obey it." What is the source of that authority but the parents? And what is to prevent the Sunday school from obtaining from the same source the same authority? Properly appealed to, the parents will gladly give it, and will reinforce it by home discipline whenever necessary.

Consider the matter of irregular attendance, so serious a hindrance to Sunday-school work. Sunday schools are

here at a great disadvantage as compared with secular schools, which have authority to compel attendance. But here again the source of authority, if you trace it up, is the parents — the same parents that send their children to the Sunday school. I believe that if the parents were gathered together, and if some clear-cut speaker should point out to them the supreme value, for time and eternity, of their children's Sunday-school lessons, and should show how little time is given them compared with the time spent in secular studies, and how very necessary it is, therefore, that they should come with great regularity — I believe that, if this appeal were made, the parents would respond with a willing determination that would bring Sunday-school attendance up to the level of the secular school.

Another particular in which Sunday schools are yet far behind secular schools is the matter of grading. The indefiniteness of Sunday-school work, the lack of progress, of promotion, of stints and goals, is its most serious lack to-day. And it is a lack which may be remedied with comparative ease, without departing at all from the uniform lessons.

Few grades should be established at first; let it be a growth. Let the officers and teachers determine, to start with, what ought to be known by the primary scholars before they are allowed to graduate into the intermediate department. Perhaps you will require a knowledge of the leading facts in the lives of twelve Old Testament characters — say, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Samuel, David, Elijah, Esther, Daniel. Also, outlines of the stories of Christ and of Paul. Also, in

memory, the Commandments, the Twenty-third Psalm, and the Beatitudes.

In the same way, fix upon the requirements you will lay down for graduation from the intermediate to the senior department. You will want fuller biographical knowledge, an outline of the history of Old and New Testament times, and you will add the principal Christian doctrines, perhaps in the form of some catechism.

After the scope of these two departments is clearly defined, and the definition put into familiar practice, it will be time to go on to the senior department, where you will want to establish courses in advanced study, such as the International Committee has laid down. Schools vary so greatly in their capability that probably no one can fix your curriculum for you. My plea is that you fix it for yourselves, however roughly, slowly, and tentatively; that you give diplomas; that you hold out before the scholars the incentive to definite accomplishment, a course to run, a goal to reach, an olive wreath on the goal-post.

Grading and promotion carry with them as essentials the use of another secular school method — persistent and searching examinations. Until the scholars got used to the idea, I would make a written test a part of every Sunday's lesson. It need not take long, if you have pencils and paper all ready, and if you so frame your questions that they can be fully answered very briefly. Do not discourage the pupils; begin with questions you know they can easily answer, and increase the difficulty as your scholars become more confident.

Another secular-school peculiarity that should accompany grading is the fixing of teachers in certain grades.

Sentimental reasons have led many Sunday schools to allow one class to retain one teacher from infancy to maturity, if, as seldom happens, the class holds together for so long. Think how foolish this practice would appear in the public schools! Some teachers cannot be excelled in the high school, but they would be quite at sea in a kindergarten. Remaining for years in a single grade, secular teachers become familiar with their subjects, and with the characteristics of children of a certain age, and know just how to manage them both so as to get the best results. Moreover, every teacher has his own peculiar excellence, and the scholar, passing from one to another, has a chance to gain the excellences of all. It should be thus in the Sunday school. And when it is, our Sunday-school teachers will begin to take more pride in their work, and qualify for it. The restriction of its limits will put it within comprehensible bounds, and make it possible for the teacher to become a master.

That, indeed, is another important respect in which Sunday schools may learn from secular schools. Sunday-school teachers do not, as a class, proudly recognize their teaching as a profession. Secular teachers in many States are required to have a normal-school training. Everywhere, they must prove their fitness by examinations. Everywhere, they must maintain their fitness by study, if they would hold their positions, and they must broaden their outlook by attendance on vigorous conventions and the reading of professional books and periodicals.

All this, happily, is coming to be true of Sunday-school teachers. Normal schools for them are springing up. Normal text-books for home use are multiplying. They

have admirable books on the art of teaching in Sunday schools, and they have most excellent periodicals for their special work. They also have their conventions, inspiring and practical. What is needed is that Sunday-school teachers come to use these facilities for growth as faithfully as secular teachers use theirs; and I believe that, as graded schools multiply, this zeal for a pedagogical equipment will increase.

Closer contact between Sunday-school teachers and secular teachers would be good for both classes of workers. They have to do, in any community, with the same sets of children, and it is strange that they so seldom coöperate.

Much is gained, every way, when secular teachers will teach in the Sunday schools. They reach, then, all sides of their children. They have a far stronger hold upon them. And their expert training is of inestimable advantage to the Sunday school. Nor, to one whose business is teaching, need the one additional hour a week prove a heavy burden.

But, since most secular teachers wish to drop teaching wholly for Sunday as well as Saturday, the next best thing is for the two classes of workers to get together now and then. Occasionally have the public-school superintendent or one of his teachers address the Sunday school, at a concert or a regular session, on temperance, patriotism, or some other special theme. Let the Sunday-school teachers visit the public schools often, seeing their scholars in their chief setting and noting the methods of teaching that are successful there. Perhaps the teachers will agree to pay such a visit twice a month for a year.

When a public-school convention is accessible, announce it in the Sunday school, and urge the teachers to attend, and to seize upon whatever applies to the Sunday school. Circulate among the teachers some of the text-books on child-psychology and pedagogy that secular teachers study.

Nothing, however, is more useful than for the two classes of teachers to meet socially. Prepare a pleasant supper, preferably at a private house, and invite both Sunday-school and public-school teachers to enjoy a meal together, spending the evening afterwards in talking about the children they are teaching. After a comparison of views and exchange of experiences by conversation, the evening may close with the open discussion of some teaching problem that concerns all alike, such as discipline, or home study, or the coöperation of parents.

Following such a gathering as this, the public-school teachers might be persuaded to go to the Sunday school and watch the methods used there, and then, at the next teachers' meeting of the Sunday school, frankly give their impressions, and make suggestions for the betterment of the work. The secular teachers would probably wish the Sunday-school teachers to return the visit and repay the criticisms. If they did not, the loss would be theirs.

As the result of such intercourse, I should expect the best of secular-school methods to be introduced into our Sunday schools: written tests, much use of blackboard and pencil and paper, the making of maps, the writing of essays, the preparing of diagrams and charts, the use of object teaching, and such introduction of the secular studies the scholars are pursuing — their history, science, geography, literature — as will make them see how vital is the

Bible, and how it fits into modern life. Both scholars and teachers would gain broader views, and fresh incentives.

As I have said, this association of the Sunday-school and secular-school forces seems so obviously the thing to do that the wonder is that it has remained so long undone. I hope that this chapter may prompt many schools to make at least a beginning in this direction.

XVI

HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN

Of all things that man can do, the most blessedly fruitful is wise talking to children. This is the supreme art. No sculptor molds a statue so superb as a growing life. No artist has ever painted a picture that compares with a lovely character. The architect cannot rear a building, the poet cannot write an ode, the inventor cannot design a machine, that is worthy to stand for an instant beside the completed, living, loving, achieving product of wise teaching.

If this is true — and it is true with an emphasis that men are only beginning to feel — then no art is so well worth learning, so well worth the spending of time and the taking of pains, as the art of talking to children. And how little the art is studied! How much attention, even in the training of ministers and of secular teachers, is paid to the things that are to be taught, and how little is paid to the vitally important means of getting the things that are to be taught into the minds and lives of the boys and girls! How much weak, flabby, and uninteresting talk is addressed to the poor innocents! But they have their happy and appropriate revenge. They do not listen to it, or pretend to!

I suppose the first of all faults in talking to children

— as, indeed, is commonly recognized — is the fault of "talking down" to them. Why *down?* If we must all become as little children, if their characteristics are, on the whole, the standard of the kingdom of heaven toward which we profess to be striving, why not talk *up* to them? Would not reverence be a more appropriate attitude than condescension?

The first essential for all successful talking to children is a profound respect for them. We are to respect their purity, the keenness of their fresh, unspoiled minds. We are to value their good opinion, and count their love a very crown of glory. We are to enjoy them, to like to be with them, to love them dearly.

I have heard persons say, without at all realizing the depth of their confession, "I cannot seem to care for children. They tire me." And I have heard those same persons complaining peevishly because children would not be influenced by them. Men and women of brilliant intellects are sometimes complete failures as talkers to children, just because they do not care for children; and the children, in about one-fourth of a second, find it out! Not to care for children is not to care for the first essential for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. One who does not care for *that* cannot talk helpfully about religious matters to children or any one else.

The first essential, then, for talking to children, is to like the children. The second, is to like to talk. If your tongue is stiff, if talking is awkward for you, if you shrink from it and do not leap toward the chance for it, then you will not get into touch with the children. *They* have no trouble in talking, and they cannot understand yours!

The cure for this very real difficulty is just talking. As Edward Everett Hale says in his advice to those that would become public speakers: "Make a speech whenever any one is fool enough to ask you to." Lose no opportunity of talking to children. Talk to them at their play. Fling little bits of talk at them as you pass them on the street. Talk with them one by one and in groups. Watch yourself. Watch others that do it better than you. Learn from your failures. If the children draw away from you, if they are reserved in your presence, or if they persist in showing you the worse side of their natures, the fault is not in them, nor is it in you if you really love them; it is in your manner, and manners can be changed. Be satisfied with a little improvement, however gradually it comes. Art is long, and this is the greatest of all arts.

The third essential in talking to children is to have something you very much want to say. It must be something very definite; you must know exactly what it is, and you must be on fire with impatience to get it said. Is not that the way the children talk? The child is fairly bursting with his news or his thought. He quivers with eagerness to speak it. He cannot be repressed. If compelled first to raise his hand, that hand is waved excitedly. That is the way children talk to one another, and they will not respond to any other manner in you.

Here is a teacher without any clear-cut idea of the lesson to be taught, without any clearly discerned climax toward which the lesson is to be conducted, and without any ardor of longing to make a certain impression and produce a certain result. Can this vagueness, this indifference, attract the businesslike children? Watch a girl

rush in to her playmate's house. "Oh, Belle! Something's going to happen! Guess what!" Then compare it with the way you go at the teaching of the Sunday-school lesson, and draw your own conclusions.

If the third essential for talking to children is to have something you very much want to say, the fourth essential is to know just how you are going to say it. To be sure, the children form no plan for their talk with one another; but here that talk ceases to be a model, for it is scrappy, interjectional, communicative but not constructive. It is a whiff here and a whiff there, and in the meanwhile they are racing all over the house. Our Sunday-school talk with them must be something far higher and more difficult. The plan of it cannot be trusted to the inspiration of a moment.

The best talkers to children, those whose talk moves most easily and brightly and with the least apparent effort and premeditation, have meditated the most earnestly and carefully upon it beforehand, have perfected their plan and drilled themselves in all its details with a minuteness and an assiduity that would be the marvel of the poor teacher or even the average one. They leave nothing to "the inspiration of the moment." They know that moments have inspiration quite in proportion to the moments of thorough preparation that have preceded them. Their seemingly off-hand remarks are thought out and led up to. They leave nothing to chance. No art leaves anything to chance.

This ardor of plans and preparation is what saves a man when he is called upon suddenly to talk to children entirely without preparation. I remember visiting a Sun-

day school once with Hezekiah Butterworth, and I shall not forget my trepidation when asked to speak to the children in the presence of that master of the art. But my long habit of planning talks to children came into play. Fumbling hastily and despairingly in my pockets for some object that might give me an idea, I hit upon two lead pencils. "What does the lead pencil do?" I asked myself. "It expresses something," I answered; and I had my talk. With my hand still in my pocket, I broke off the lead in one pencil so that it did not show at all, while the other was left well pointed. Then I stepped confidently before the children.

"What is this?" I wanted to know, holding up the maimed pencil. It was a pencil. They were sure it was. I had my doubts. What does a pencil do? It writes, they told me. So I took a piece of paper from my pocket and showed them that the little stick of wood could not write. Then I proposed that we ask the stick of wood itself. They agreed, and I began to hold a conversation with the pencil, placing it close to my ear to get its replies and pass them on to the children. The pencil's name, it appeared, was Mr. Brokenoff. He came from a Russian family. He was a lead pencil, but his lead was far down in the wood, where it did no good. But he wanted to know why the children were laughing at him. Some of *them* belonged to the Brokenoff family, too. I asked the children if they wanted him to explain. Of course they did. So the pencil, in a faint little squeak that I had to interpret, told about the child that never said "Thank you," to human beings or to God; and the child who "knew it, but couldn't tell it," and the child

that didn't answer when spoken to, and other children that may have had good thoughts and kind thoughts in them, but did not get them out on their tongues. The children admitted that all such folks belonged to the same family as poor Mr. Brokenoff.

Then I produced the sharpened pencil, and introduced him as Mr. Pointed. A similar dialogue was held with him, with more hopeful results. He belonged to the bright, happy family of those that speak out the gratitude and love and knowledge that are in their hearts. The children all wanted to belong to his family.

That simple little talk, to which the children listened with all their eyes, ears, and brains, I have since greatly amplified with the aid of a jackknife and other apparatus; but the essence of it came to me in that flash of suggestion as I felt in my pockets for something to talk about. I describe it as an illustration of the extemporaneous ability that is the result of long planning and practice, and that never, never comes otherwise.

I describe it also as an illustration of one or two essentials of effective talk to children about which I wish next to speak; and the first of these — the fifth of my list — is animation. I do not mean that nervous, Jack-in-the-box sprightliness which so many affect when they come before the long-suffering young people, but I mean the same sort of animation which the children themselves so abundantly exhibit — their faces shining with interest, their eyes sparkling, their hands gesturing, their minds alert. The children are themselves so much alive that they endow with life everything that they touch. You must be and do the same. If you give such a pencil talk as I have

described, you must handle that pencil, not as if it were a bit of dead wood, but as if it were a tiny little man.

The sixth essential is akin to that, namely, picturesqueness. Talk concretely and not abstractly. Of course it helps wonderfully to have some object in your hands, if only a broken lead pencil; but what I mean just now is the translation of truth into life. For example, I did not make Mr. Brokenoff speak of "the lack of self-expression," or even of "a failure to manifest gratitude." He squeaked out, "There's a girl down there, and someone gave her a piece of candy yesterday, and she never said 'Thank y', ma'am.'" Don't talk to the children about covetousness; talk about old Mr. Grind, who holds a dime so close to his eyes that it shuts out all the rest of the world; or, talk about Mr. Mean, who keeps the deacon waiting with the collection-box while he hunts for the smallest coin in his purse.

From that same pencil illustration I deduce also my seventh essential, namely, a bit of fun. The life of the little talk was the pretended conversation with the pencils, the holding them close to my ear, the requests that they "speak just a little louder, if you can," the asking the children if *they* could hear. All children are fun-loving, and a little whiff of play or joke will wash down their minds a deal of wholesome truth. For example, I have one talk which I call "Jimmie's Shoes." It is a piece of moralizing — stiff moralizing — from beginning to end; but the children never suspect it, because with almost the first sentence I trot out two dirty little shoes — boy's shoes — with stuffed red stockings rising out of them as natural as life, and through all the talk they are perform-

ing their antics just as if the live Jimmie were in them — kicking, stamping, running away from school, loitering on errands, scuffing through the dust and mud, and the like, until, after suitable experiences, Jimmie's shoes begin to walk in the right way.

Such a bit of fun will carry any talk, however serious inherently, to a triumphantly successful conclusion. But what if — as some folks say — you "have no fun in you"? What if "fun is not natural to you"? Then change your nature! Just make a beginning at it, and see, to your delight, how the ability will grow. At first your fun will be elephantine, very likely; but in time it may become — well, even kittenish!

The eighth essential for talking to children, and the last I shall name, is that it must touch life in its eternal interests. Children are idealists. We are to be practical in our talk with them, but it must be a practicality that takes hold of heaven. Through all our fun must run the gold thread of an earnest purpose. All our planning must have one goal, and that is character.

"This one thing I do" is the secret of success in talking to children, as in everything else; and the one thing is soul-saving. To that one end Paul used many means, and so must we; but always in strict subordination to the one end. Many, when they set out to talk to children, make the talk itself the virtual end. It is too elaborate, it has too many points, it confuses with its chemicals and its drawings and its stories and its acrostics. No real impression is made, but merely a sort of rainbowish blur. A talk to children should be simple and clear, and brief enough to admit of repetition and emphasis. Every Sun-

day-school lesson has one teaching which should be made to stand out like the Matterhorn. Don't make of it a perplexing mountain range.

And above all things, keep yourself out of sight! Talking to children is not a matter of talk, but of children; not a matter of showing off your own skill or tickling their fancy, but a matter of life or death, for time and eternity. It is, as I said at the beginning, the most serious and important work in which man can engage, and, if it is successful, it is the most blessed and fruitful. May we be guided in it by the Spirit of Christ, who spake — to children as well as their elders — as never man spake!

XVII

BIBLE LESSONS B. C.

Bible Lessons B. C. are those that are unrelated to A. D. 1912, or whatever may be the year, month, and day in which they are taught. They are lessons that stop short somewhere before A. D. 100, and never touch our present-day perplexities. They are lessons for information and not for inspiration, for learning and not for life. They may teach ancient history and abstract ethics, but they do not teach conduct or form character. Bible lessons B. C. are those that have no bearing on the living world, and, if such lessons are not taught anywhere in your Sunday school, I should like an invitation to it!

To be sure, those lessons were once electric with fiery power. You are dealing with words that made kings tremble, that lifted nations from the depths to the heights, that thrilled men's souls like the battle-cry. They can do it still. They will do it still, whenever they are brought into contact with living men and events, as they were flung up against them when they were first spoken or written; but not if they are allowed to remain B. C.

Bible lessons B. C. are failures — not necessarily as literary efforts, but always as religious efforts. For religion is dead unless it is related to life. If your teaching of the parable of the prodigal son does not make your pupil feel its bearing on the next man he sees staggering

down street, you might as well be teaching the Trojan War. If your exposition of the Sermon on the Mount does not apply to the grocery on the next corner, you might as well be expounding Cicero *De Senectute*. If Elijah has no message for Tommy Jones, it makes little difference what message he had for Ahab.

Let us allow no one to surpass us in desire for accurate and thorough scholarship. These great events are worth learning about in themselves. These great men and women are worth meeting in themselves. When we meet them, we cannot help being ennobled by them. Ah, yes, when we meet them! And we cannot meet them when they are left B. C.

How can we avoid this cold, impersonal, academic mode of teaching? How can we teach lessons in A. D. 1912? How can we relate the Bible to the life of to-day?

First, by relating it to our own life. No teacher can make the Bible vital to others until it is vital to himself. In studying each lesson his first query should be, "What lesson is here for my own heart? What example is here for me to imitate? What warning is here? What commandment to obey?" This search as far surpasses any intellectual stimulus to study as the investigation of a mountain made by a miner prospecting for gold is more eager than that made by a government engineer.

In the second place, we can bring the Bible down to the present times by studying each lesson with the lives of our scholars in view. The true teacher will ask every week, "How can I bring that bit of Bible next Sunday into the life of Lucy Greene, and help her over her laziness? into the life of Ned Marston, and help him over

his tendency to evil companionship? into the life of Lawyer Rankin, and help him over his doubts and into the joy of believing?"

To do this the teacher must, of course, know his scholars' lives, their helps and hindrances, their needs and powers. He must see them in their homes and draw them into his home. He must walk with them and talk with them, play with them and study with them. He must know their parents and know them through their parents. He must be willing to spend time and take pains in order to know his scholars' lives. Life is never to be learned save at the cost of time and pains.

Undoubtedly, though there will be something in each lesson for the life of every scholar, some lesson will be especially adapted to the needs of Susan Gregg, and another lesson to the needs of Archibald Anderson. For many reasons the wise teacher will look far ahead in the list of lessons, and for no reason more urgently than for this — that he may plan his campaign of character-building. Of course, when the special day comes whose lesson is best calculated to meet the needs of Susan Gregg, that particular scholar may be absent from the class. But even then she may be reached by a letter; and in many cases, indeed, the most effective way to make these personal applications of the lessons is to write strong and hearty letters to your scholars, handing them out in the class or sending them through the mail.

In the third place, we can avoid Bible lessons B. C., and relate the lessons to this present world, by studying each lesson with the world in view. For this purpose also we must look ahead, and ever bear in mind the lessons for

several months in advance. It is an excellent plan to keep a little blank book, which you will carry with you, assigning a page to each lesson, and writing its topic at the head of the page. Then, as you read the newspapers, or converse with others, or observe the life around you, ask for each event as it arises, "What coming lesson does it illustrate? Which of their teachings does it exemplify?" You will be quite certain to place it somewhere and most suitably.

Get the aid of the scholars in this matter; the applications they themselves make they will be the most likely to remember. One scholar each week might be appointed for the purpose of bringing before the class a single point in which the lesson fits our modern life. He might be called the "A. D." scholar, and it should be made an honor to receive this appointment.

The newspapers, those "mirrors of the times," are useful adjuncts in this attempt to relate the Bible to modern life. Of course, there are some newspapers to which no Sunday-school scholar should be sent, and on this point it would be well to consult each parent; but most localities support at least one clean journal, and the summaries of the week's news given in the religious press and in the secular weeklies are in many cases complete, able, and entirely satisfactory.

With that proviso, then, I suggest the appointment of a newspaper reader for your class, a different scholar each week. He will be called the "Reporter," and he may wear a badge marked "Reporter." The scholars will receive the distinction in turn. Each reporter must study the lesson first, and then study the news of the

week to see how it carries out the teachings of the lesson, or would have been changed if the teachings of the lesson had been followed.

For example, the lesson is on John the Baptist and Herod. Your reporter will note some iniquity of the day that needs a reformer, or he will describe the bold work of some modern John the Baptist confronting some modern Herod — some thief in politics, perhaps, or some oppressor of the poor, or some royal autocrat against whose iniquitous rule the people have risen in revolt.

The teacher will need to assist most scholars in this search for points of contact between the old and the new; at least, this help will be necessary at the start. But the teacher will have his notebook to draw upon, and the scholars will soon become independent of his aid.

References to history — to any history that is modern — will serve to attach the Bible narratives to our present day. The parallels, for instance, are many and close between the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and the abolition of slavery in America. David's combat with Goliath may be compared to the struggle of the Netherlands with Spain. Elijah on Carmel made no bolder stand for Jehovah than the missionaries before the king of Uganda. Livingstone was a modern Joshua, and one need not look far for modern Ninevehs.

And so, if the class is old enough, I should add to the class Reporter a class Historian. He should be a good scholar, and an enthusiast for history. You will hardly be able to appoint a different scholar each week, but the office will be somewhat of a permanency. Indeed, the

work is so difficult that you will be obliged to come often to the historian's aid with your fuller knowledge and your readier wit. Historical parallels may not be found always, even then; but when they are found, they do much to vitalize the lessons.

Classes that are still older may add to the Reporter and the Historian a Sociologist. This exalted personage will consider for each lesson its bearing on modern society in the widest aspects — on trade and labor, on wealth and poverty, on crime and prisons, on war and government. This member of your class must be something of a philosopher; he must see things in the large. He must be able also to interest others in these large questions, and he and the teacher will have a noble opportunity to exhibit the Bible as the one book of social principles, amply adequate to solving the many problems and harmonizing the many discords of modern society.

And now I think that I need not apologize for this chapter, as if I were introducing a distracting feature, likely to withdraw interest from the Book itself and divide honors with it. Not at all. I know of no line of study that so compels faithfulness and thoroughness of Bible research as this application of the Bible to modern life. We must know the Bible of the past before we can make it the inspiration of the present. This fitting of the Bible to present-day problems is not a substitute for Bible study, but a stimulus to it.

And, studied in this way, how vital the old Book becomes! It is seen at once to be of all times and of all nations. It solves perplexities, removes difficulties, com-

forts sorrows, overcomes enemies, to-day as in the times of Paul, David, or Moses. It is a spring of living water, breaking out afresh in every century from the underlying love of God, always adequate, always new, and always divine.

XVIII

THE TEACHER'S IMAGINATION

Undoubtedly the first essential for a successful Sunday-school teacher is a burning desire to acquaint his scholars with Jesus Christ; but I am inclined to think that the second essential is an alert imagination.

The imagination is the faculty of putting yourself in another's place. The other person may be one of the characters of the lesson, and his place may be in a strange and far-away land, in ancient days; or, he may be one of your own scholars. In either case, your insight into the lesson you are to teach, or the scholar who is to be taught, will depend upon this faculty of imagination.

It is a divine faculty, for God alone has it in perfection. He alone can completely put himself in another's place, knowing another's thoughts and experiencing another's emotions. It is the faculty of poets, also, their sympathetic minds pressing eagerly into experiences remote from their own.

Both brain and heart are required for the act of imagination. The intellect must be strong to comprehend and love must be quick to apprehend. You cannot put yourself in another's place unless you understand what that place is. You will never be anything but a stranger in that place unless you take a deep interest in the life you are seeking to enter.

All lives that are entered in this way enrich the thinker. They are new homes to him. Every one of them adds to his spiritual estate. He becomes through this masterful quality of the imagination a citizen of many lands, the familiar of many abodes. He can never lack the pleasant employment of visiting these dwellings of the spirit, and he can never be lonely.

Some matter-of-fact persons look with suspicion, not to say scorn, at all exercise of the imagination upon the Bible. They appear to regard it as a process of adding to those sacred words. Both addition and subtraction there are indeed at our peril, and certainly I should be the last to advocate such operations. But imaginative treatment of the Bible is not falsifying it; rather, it is the best way of getting at the truth of it. It is not the concocting of a fairy story, but the discovery of history. It is not "making up" what never happened; it is "making real" by perceiving what must have happened, but is not recorded.

For the Scripture narratives are wonderfully condensed. Writing was not, in ancient times, a matter of easy dictation to a stenographer, or of swift gallop along the keys of the typewriter. A stylus was a different affair from a fountain pen, and papyrus cost more than your pencil tablet. Writing was not only difficult but it was unusual, and men had not learned to color a gallon of words with a gill of thought. Modern writers do all our work for us. They leave no gaps to be filled by meditation and imagination. They give us food that is cooked, garnished, predigested. But the ancient writers give us the unground grain; we hardly know what to do with it.

If, in a modern newspaper, such an event were chronicled as the raising from death of the widow's son at Nain, would it be passed off with four inches of fine type in the inner corner of Section Four, page 32? If it were, how many would read it?

But no! It would be given a scarehead, with a plentiful supply of heads in addition. The portrait of the young man would appear, and of his mother, and of the Healer. There would be a picture of the funeral procession, and of the dead man just coming to life upon his bier.

A reporter would have interviewed every spectator of the scene and all the members of the family, and the experiences and feelings of each would be set forth vividly. The account would go back over the family history. It would tell about the father — who he was, and what a loss was his death to the widow. It would recount the mother's struggles to feed the boy and clothe him and give him an education. It would state the opinion of his teachers regarding him; he was a lad of much promise. Neighbor Daniel, the banker, would confide to the reporter the fact that he had had his eye on the boy for a long time. "Sure to rise," says Mr. Daniel. The young man had already begun to earn money. His mother saw the beginning of all her fond anticipations.

And then came the cruel fever. Its duration, in that fierce Eastern clime, was very brief, only a few days. And the newspaper would picture her despair, and the instantaneous reversal of her life, when her only son passed away. It was just that morning. The neighbors had rushed in with their loudly wailed sympathy.

The whole of the little hill town was moved to pity. The newspaper would describe the sad funeral procession: the open bier with its bearers; the mother following after, bowed almost to the earth in her distress; the neighbors and friends at a respectful distance, all on foot, and all uttering shrill outcries of woe. It was a pitiful procession, crawling down the narrow, steep road to the cemetery.

But at this point the newspaper record would change its tone. What is this joyous company that appears in view, blocking the path, crowding around one central and commanding figure? They are on their way to Nain, and it will be troublesome for the two companies to pass. Also, their aspect is most incongruous, for an eager joy and a radiant peace rest upon every face.

The two groups are about to pass, the bearers of the bier crowding to one side and the ascending throng crowding to the other. But what is this? The majestic leader, the mysterious stranger, with an authoritative gesture commands the bearers to stop and to lower the bier. "I was indignant," said one of them, Benjamin Bar-Joseph, to the reporter, "and I was going to remonstrate; but something about the man made me obey him. What if I had not!"

I do not think the reporter would make much of a description of the climax. Reporters are better at preliminaries and at reminiscences — the very matters the Bible omits. The newspaper would cut but a poor figure in reciting the electric words of life, and portraying the returning flush, the softening figure beneath the shroud, the

opening eyes, the slow first utterance, and above all the mother's transport of amazement and delight.

But when he came to the after narrative, the reporter would shine again. He would interview the young man, and garner what confused impressions remained of his brief hours with death and his summons to renewed existence. "I seemed to hear a voice, far away but wonderfully clear and sweet, calling me back to the body I had abandoned." That might be one of the fragments from the reporter's notebook. Thus the mother would be interviewed, and the principal spectators, including the ruler of the synagogue and the village doctor. There would also be comments from the Master's own party. Peter would tell of the healing of his mother-in-law, and would describe in rapid phrases the other deeds of the Wonder-worker. The newspaper's paragrapher would hit off the event with a pregnant sentence in his department, and some editorial writer would discuss in learned phrase its bearing upon modern psychology.

In all, at least four columns would be given to the marvel, at least four thousand words. Luke's account contains seven verses, one hundred and sixty-five words!

This is why the Bible-teacher must be imaginative. Scene after scene that has stirred the hearts of mankind for all these centuries is thus cramped into quarters unbelievedly small. Four sentences describe Pentecost. The parable of the lost sheep, with its interpretation and application, is comprised in four sentences. The longest of the three accounts of the transfiguration occupies only nine verses. The wonderful conversation in which Christ

restores to Peter, by the Sea of Galilee, his commission to feed the sheep and the lambs, is only four verses long. We have in the Bible only the skeleton of events, the barest outline of characters, but an outline so vital that it clothes itself, under the brooding of the consecrated imagination, with veritable flesh and blood.

Nothing can take the place of this brooding, if we are to understand the Bible. As well expect to become acquainted with a man from a chart of his bodily measurements, as think to enter into the meaning of one of these Bible incidents by noting merely what is set down in the text.

Suppose, for example, you are reading the account of the healing of the paralytic let down through the roof. Matthew gives you one verse; Mark, five; and Luke, four. Nothing is said about the sick man's feelings when he found the crowd so great that he could not reach the Healer. Disappointed? Terribly, of course. Someone must have proposed going up on the roof. Was it one of the bearers? I think it was a woman's ready and determined love. I think his mother was there, or his sister, or his wife! Nothing is said of the difficulty of carrying the paralytic up the narrow and steep outside stairs. It must have been a tug. And the poor man must have stifled many a groan.

Then they looked over the edge of the porch roof, down into the crowd. But Jesus was not there. On the contrary, every face was turned eagerly inward. They could hear the clear and steady tones of the Master's voice, and it sounded immediately below them.

I think that a woman stepped in here also. I think it

was she who saw a tile loose, and pulled it up. I can see her, with her finger on her lips, pointing eagerly down. She pulls one of the bearers to her, and shows him Jesus immediately below. The sick man has his eyes shut. A deadly pallor has come over his face, though he lies in the hot sun. The woman gives an anguished glance at her beloved one, and begins to tear at the roof like one insane. Two of the bearers help her. The other two expostulate. It was the house of Simeon Bar-Isaac. And what would Simeon say? And they were disturbing the meeting down below. Secretly they said to one another, glancing at the sick man, "He's as good as dead already; what's the use?"

But in the meantime how was it beneath them, in the courtyard and under the porch roof? Well, at first they would not notice what was going on above, they were so interested in the Master's fascinating stories and burning words. Then, as the patch of light appears above, with a woman's face in it, and next a man's, several would be caught by the sight, and some eyes would be turned upward. Watch that impetuous young John, close to the Teacher, drinking in every word. His brow contracts. He is impatient at any threat of an interruption or hindrance.

But suddenly there is an immense racket immediately over the Master's head. The light square widens rapidly. Pieces of dirt come tumbling down. A bit of tiling clatters to the floor. The air is full of dust, and people begin to sneeze. Some of the dirt falls on the Master and He stops His talk, looking up inquiringly. "Quit that, you up there!" shouts Peter. "Hey, there, what are

you about?" screams Simeon Bar-Isaac, pushing his way into the court to get a view of the trespassers.

Ah! what is this? The square of light, now become wide enough, is filled with a sagging bundle, which is rapidly lowered, a broad cloth being held at the four corners. A voice is heard from above: "It's Jacob, the paralytic. Take him, you below there. For the love of God!" From the bed, doubled up, protrudes the head of a man. The eyes are shut. He has fainted away, or he is already dead.

Peter, all his anger gone, leaps to grasp the unwieldy bundle — unwieldy, but sadly light. Judas Iscariot turns away with a sneer. John and Philip spring to help Peter. They lay the bed, without a word, at the feet of the great Physician. A flood of light pours from the jagged hole in the roof upon the pallid face and the wasted, twisted form.

The crowd presses closer, hushed and expectant, all eyes on the Master. Had not they all heard of the leper near by, his flesh made whole again at a mysterious word? Had they not heard of the sick boy of their own town, healed by some wonderful power that traveled through the air? Had they not heard of Peter's wife's mother, their own neighbor, brought back from death's door? She was in that very crowd, probably, with the nobleman's son. And now — what will Jesus do?

Well, we know what Jesus did. The Bible tells us. I have only been imagining the preliminaries, which the Bible does not tell us; but these things, all of them, must have taken place just about as I have supposed them.

Then, many things must have taken place after the

miracle; things the Bible does not tell us, but they are just as certain as if recorded in its pages. One thing, very likely, is that Judas hunted up Simeon Bar-Isaac, to assure him that none of the disciples had been fool enough to break up his roof. Another thing is the amazement of the throng as that well-known paralytic took up his mattress and walked off stoutly, with it rolled up under his arm. Did not Thomas accompany him part way, to get from his own lips a statement of how long he had been sick, and to make quite sure that he had been a paralytic? I think so. And as he neared his home, I think that, in pure joy of his new powers, he broke into a run. His children saw him coming, and could hardly believe their eyes. "Father!" they cried. "It's father! *Running!*" And they ran to meet him. "Are you *sure* you ought not to lie down a little, dear?" his wife asked, anxiously. "No more bed for me in the daytime," he answered proudly. And I think he added, "Just as soon as the crowd gets away from Simeon's, I'm going around there to mend his roof!"

I have given these illustrations at length because in this subject we are more helped by illustrations than by precepts. But the fundamental idea is to *think into* a Bible scene all you can fairly think into it. Locate it, first. Get its place on the map. From books on Palestine, books of travel, George Adams Smith's "Historical Geography," and the like, learn what the place looked like. Were any mountains in sight? Was any river? About how wide was the street? Of what material was the house made? What was growing in the fields? Might a bird have been singing near by? What kind of bird?

Was the sun shining, likely? How hot was it, probably?

Then, having put into the surroundings all you can (but your reading will continually paint in more), turn to the people. Who were there? Were the Twelve? If so, what did Peter probably do and say? and Judas? and John? Who else may have been there? And what were their emotions? And what came before the bit that is recorded? And what came after it?

As we go on, using our imaginations thus, they will lead us to see how little we really know, and will constantly urge us to fresh studies. For we are not to read our modern conditions into those ancient records; that would be comparatively easy. But we are constantly to suspect that their ways were different from ours. We are not to follow Da Vinci in placing the Last Supper at a high table with chairs. We are not to fancy that Elishama's "penknife" had a back and blades with spring joints. We are not to imagine the food that Joseph carried to his brothers in Shechem to have been wrapped in tissue paper. We can be sure that the fundamental human emotions then were the same as now. Everything else — the nonessentials — we can guess to have been quite unlike our present arrangements.

Therefore the student who will exercise his imagination upon the Bible will be an ardent student of the great Bible dictionaries, the volumes on Bible antiquities, and the descriptions by modern travelers of this land where for ages the customs remain unchanged. He will pore over his Geikie and Edersheim and Farrar. He will delight in stories of Bible times, like Ingraham's trilogy, Mrs. Phelps-Ward's "Come Forth" and "The

Master of the Magicians," Lew Wallace's "Ben Hur." He will see these great scenes through the eyes of the poets, in such interpretations as Browning's "Saul" and "An Epistle of Karshish," Charles Wells's "Joseph," Taylor's "Elijah," Wilkinson's "Paul," Milton's "Samson Agonistes" and "Paradise Regained," Longfellow's "Christus," Byron's "Cain," and Arnold's "Light of the World." He will need all the help he can get, for this reconstruction of the past is not an easy matter.

Perhaps, after all, his best help will be the children. They will understand him, here, though the Dry-as-Dusts shake their heads. Their unspoiled imaginations will leap ahead of his, and will return with spoil of many treasures. You will need only to show them how to think out these matters, and after they have caught the knack of it you can assign to them any scene you please, and they will return it to you gloriously and wisely enlarged.

I have already hinted at the teacher's application of this imaginative faculty, once it is developed, to the discovery of his scholars' real lives, enabling him in some true fashion to put himself in their places, hearing with their unskilled ears, entering into their often confused minds, and comprehending from the inside their fears, their temptations, their sorrows, their ambitions, and their joys.

This same imaginative faculty, as it is developed and directed in the scholars, will do as much for them as for the teacher. It will teach them also to put themselves in the place of others. It will give them not merely a better understanding of the past, but a finer grasp of the

present. In short, it will teach them the lesson which is the ultimate wisdom inherent in all works of a noble imagination — the great and priceless lesson of sympathy. And that will be grandly worth while.

XIX

TEST YOUR WORK

Sunday-school teachers can know very little about the real results of their work without giving written examinations. I do not believe there is a teacher on earth, however thorough and inspiring his work, who would not be greatly surprised and sorely chagrined when his scholars took their first written test or examination.

It is so easy to ask leading questions, and so hard to realize how little real information they disclose. So much depends upon the tone and inflection of the questioner's voice. So much is picked up by the scholar from what other scholars say, and from the whole context of the recitation. It is quite impossible to be sure that a pupil actually knows a fact until some fair question, isolated and unexpected, has elicited the correct written reply. Then the teacher may be certain that he has driven one nail in that scholar's memory, and clinched it.

A written is better than even the strictest oral examination, because it reveals so much more. Confusions as to meaning of words, for instance, are easily slurred over in speech and hidden in slovenly pronunciation; but they are unmistakable when set down in black and white. For example, in answer to my question calling for a list of Christ's three resurrection miracles one scholar wrote: "The daughter of the Irish woman," meaning Jaïrus'

daughter. Another, intending to refer to the son of the widow of Nain, and with a mind reminiscent of the Cana miracle, wrote "the Widow Cain." Many others, in quoting Christ's first recorded words, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" wrote it, "I wished not," etc. One scholar, quoting, "Thy sins are forgiven," etc., put it, "Thy sins are forgiving." I could fill this page with illustrations of similar misconceptions, very natural on the part of these groping young minds, very easily corrected when perceived, but only to be perceived by a written examination.

Spelling is an important matter, if our pupils are to have an accurate knowledge of the Bible. It is idle to expect the secular schools to teach the spelling of Bible names. When, as in a recent examination, a boy spells Jerusalem "Juslem," the teacher has a broad hint to look after the lad's pronunciation. When Lazarus is written "Lazareth," a confusion with Nazareth must be straightened out. When the pupil writes about the "cuering of the leopard," there is evidence that the disease of leprosy needs explaining. Careful spelling is so closely allied to careful thinking that it deserves the particular attention of Sunday-school teachers, and that attention can be given only through written examinations.

The secular schools have two points of distinct advantage which the Sunday schools should everywhere thoroughly adopt — their system of grading, and their examinations. Whatever may be said about the former, certainly the latter may readily be taken over, and in so doing we should at once increase the respect of the world for Sunday-school teaching. No secular education, from

primary school to university, proceeds far without an examination — a genuine test of knowledge, however that test may be disguised. Everywhere in true education it is recognized that the proof that a matter has really been taught is that the pupil is able to tell it back again. Secular teachers are often as much surprised as Sunday-school teachers would be, to discover how little they have actually succeeded in teaching; but they know that the only possibility of better teaching and better learning is through precisely that discovery, unpleasant as it always is.

The Sunday-school teachers are not excelled by any in their consecration, their zeal, their unselfish devotion to their calling. How long would any secular school exist if its teachers were not paid? What is now needed is only that Sunday-school teachers should add to their other excellencies that of thoroughness, and they may lead the educational world. Practically all criticisms upon the Sunday school are based upon the alleged slipshod character of our work. We need to show that it is not slipshod, and in no way can we prove this so well as by examinations. As soon as our Sunday-school work takes on this definite, progressive character, it will be honored as its heroism merits.

Still one more consideration in favor of examinations remains to be urged, namely, that the great desideratum of systematic grading, already mentioned, depends largely upon regular and thorough tests. In no other way can we learn the true state of the school in all its parts, and separate the scholars into workable divisions by means whose justice they must all admit. This grading, which

is so positive a stimulus to Bible study, is made possible by examinations.

And now, passing from the *why* of examinations, a few words about the *how*.

The first essential of a stimulating and just examination is that the questions shall be clear and fair. Each should be so stated as to lead to only one possible correct answer. For example, a very poor question is this: "What did Jesus say that should lead us to be brave?" — for He said too many things; no one particular utterance is in any way indicated. But this question, along the same line, could be fairly put: "What promise of his continual presence did Christ make to His disciples?"

In the second place, these questions should be so framed that their answers, while full, may yet be very brief. Questions calling for one-word or two-word answers are best, when they are possible. This is because they take so little time from the scanty recitation period; the test may be over in a flash. Moreover, they allow some time for thought on the part of the scholar; and, on the part of the teacher, the papers are very quickly corrected. It is worth while, therefore, to take much pains in writing these questions.

Every teacher should write his own questions, even though, in starting the examinations, general sets of questions may be prepared for the entire school — or at least for the intermediate department. Each teacher knows what he has been trying to teach, and the expressions he will employ are more familiar to his scholars than would be those of a stranger.

The questions should be dictated to the class, and all

will write the answer of each question (if they can!) before the next is dictated. The teacher's manner in doing this will determine the success of the plan. If he is confident and jolly, the examination will be accepted as good fun; if he is stern and anxious, it will be dreaded and avoided, and the nervous scholars will not tell half they know.

Therefore the teacher should not (in my judgment) grade these papers; or, if they are given a percentage, the record should be kept in private by the teacher. The purpose of the test is not promotion. The purpose is educative. It is to show the teacher what he has taught, and the scholars what they have learned, in order that they may go on, in partnership, to teach and learn something else. If the scholars are interested to grade their own papers and keep their own records, that will be fine, and will mark the highest success of the examinations.

Bearing in mind the educative value of these tests, the teacher will prevent cheating as strictly as any secular teacher. Examinations afford many opportunities for practical insistence upon the very qualities about which you have been talking in your Bible teaching — truthfulness, persistence, courage, and so on. Make the examinations genuine tests. Do not, usually, tell the scholars when they are coming. Do not allow the use of Bible or quarterly. Do not answer the scholars' questions as to spelling and the like. Do not permit them to whisper, or to copy from one another. If you want your work respected, you must teach the scholars to be self-respecting.

As to the frequency of these examinations, I should hold them, for a time at least, every week. That is not

too often, if you grant what has been said about the necessity of them as revelations of the real state of your scholars' knowledge. The ground covered will be the previous lesson, with occasional excursions farther back, and, on review days, surveying the entire quarter, at least. Indeed, the review exercises may largely consist of an extended examination. This plan will give to your review days an interest and significance which they have probably never had before.

Examinations being thus frequent, they will not be bugbears. Your scholars will learn to reel them off in expert fashion. You will have a chance to repeat over and over the questions on which the class has stumbled, until their knowledge has become sure and ready. A question on which the scholars have failed should *always* come up in later tests.

Finally, let us consider the results of these examinations.

Do not be afraid of the issue. The tests may seem at first to show a woeful ignorance in your scholars, and the discouraged teacher may conclude that he is a failure. Much allowance must be made, however, for the scholars' unfamiliarity with this mode of expression. The teacher must learn to distinguish between disguised knowledge — knowledge hidden behind grotesque spelling and awkward phrases — and real ignorance.

If the Sunday-school teacher could see the public-school examination papers of his scholars, he would take comfort from them! Learn to distinguish in your scholars' papers the errors due to faulty teaching in the public school, such as poor spelling, bad penmanship, and

stiff English. Nevertheless, remember that it is the business of the Bible school to teach the spelling of Bible names, and the clear expression of Bible facts and truths, and do not hide your duty behind the cloak of secular-school deficiencies. And do not seek lamely to excuse yourself and your scholars, and pretend that you have taught and they have learned what has been neither taught nor learned. There is no progress that way. Every teacher, in fact, has taught both more or less than he thinks: more to the life, probably, than he realizes, and less to the head.

And do not allow the scholars, any more than yourself, to grow discouraged. Absurdly funny answers will be written. Do not quote them or make much of them. Though many answers are wrong, praise the scholars for the attempt. Always hand back the papers to the scholars, and go over the incorrect answers with them. Inspire the scholars with a sense of something real and definite to be accomplished by the examinations, something gloriously worth while.

Above all, perhaps, these tests will be of value in showing the teacher how important it is, in teaching as in all work, to set before one's self a clear-cut task, possible of accomplishment; to accomplish it and make sure of it, and then to go on to another clear-cut task. We shall succeed far better in our teaching if we do not vaguely try to teach so much, but aim each week to plant in our scholars' minds a single truth and two or three simple facts. Definite aims, moderate expectations, and persistent testing — these are three essentials of wise pedagogy.

The subject I have treated in this essay is one very close

to my heart, because I believe it to be vitally important for our Sunday schools. I hope that I have not exaggerated or exalted the method above its proper place. Let me set down, therefore, as my final word, this warning: the examination is to be used as a tool; it must not become a fetish.

XX

THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

A man is doubly valuable if he can do things differently from other people. Differently from himself!

For variety is more than the spice of life; sometimes it comes very near to being its substance. You are likely to take walks if you have wit enough to plan walks in ever-varying directions, but your pedestrian zeal will flag if you plod continually over a familiar route. The fascination of new books will lure a boy on to read that might gain a permanent distaste for the art of arts if he were shut up to a single volume. In some families they have ordered Christmases, each member announcing what he would like (and confidently expects to receive); and in such families the spirit of Christmas and usually the observance of it promptly die.

Young folks value this element of surprise more than their elders; but all value it, perhaps more than they deign to acknowledge. Any one who would lead and teach others must create in them a pleasurable anticipation. It is thus that the skillful captain holds the attention of the squad he is putting through the manual of arms. It is thus the preacher holds his congregation, and the editor his subscribers, and the statesman his constituency. Leaders and teachers would soon lose their grip if they did not do new things, advance new plans and ideas, or present the old under novel guises. And it

is thus also with the Sunday-school teacher. Nothing is more speedily fatal to his success than plodding monotony. Few elements will contribute more definitely and powerfully to it than the element of surprise.

In creating this element of surprise it is necessary, for one thing, that the teacher himself enter into the fun with all his heart. I say "fun," because all earnest work reaches its climax of power over men's hearts when it is so enjoyed that one "would rather do it than play," when it becomes one's actual recreation. If the teacher expects others to enjoy his teaching, he must manifestly enjoy it. He must be bright-eyed, vivacious. He must entertain pleasurable anticipations of the coming lesson, and his scholars are quite sure to share in his enjoyment of the situation.

Another necessity, if one would introduce the element of surprise, is that it be planned for, with long thought ahead. Surprises sometimes come impromptu, but not often. When they do, they are usually disagreeable! The teacher that knows his business will devise his surprises, his enlivening novelties, for as many lessons in advance as his wit will carry him. And he will prudently set his notions down in black and white as soon as he conceives them.

I am aware that this will seem formidable, but it is not so formidable as it seems. One surprise a week is enough. Hoard your ideas for variety and freshness; they are precious and rare, as you may have discovered already. But a very little difference from the ordinary is enough to render a lesson noteworthy. If, for example, instead of asking questions orally, as usual, you write

them in advance on slips of paper and let the scholars mysteriously draw them, you will have their unflagging interest through the entire lesson, and a second surprise element would be foolish and wasteful. Often these slight variations from the customary manner are more striking and useful than more elaborate surprises.

The matter is made easier, too, when one realizes that it is not at all necessary to devise fifty-two different surprises in a year, and then fifty-two new ones the next year. A forgotten novelty is as good as a brand-new one. Watch children at their play. They continually tire of one game and turn to others, but they faithfully return to the abandoned games in a perpetual, loving round. So it will be with the wise teacher. If he finds — as he will — that the method of written questions arouses interest, he will not use it the following week, but he will add it to his repertoire of surprises, and trot it out in its turn, perhaps two months hence. He will place it, over and over, on the written schedule which I have suggested.

No teacher should expect to concoct all these surprises, these different ways of doing things, in his own head. If he devises one new method a year, he is a rare pedagogical genius. No; he must keep open his eyes and ears. He must take the teachers' magazines. He must attend the Sunday-school conventions. He must read books on teaching methods. He must visit other classes and other schools now and then. And from all these sources he will constantly be adding to his store of surprises, and constantly diminishing the frequency with which any particular surprise must appear upon his schedule.

There are some elements of novelty which do not wear out their usefulness as soon as others, but may be used for several consecutive lessons. These are the practices which make most active demand upon the hands and brains of the scholars. For example, if they are building up a paper-pulp map of Palestine, and getting in the process no end of information about the Holy Land, the fascinating work will furnish zest enough to carry you triumphantly through a month, or even two months, of lessons. Only, watch sharply for indications of weariness, and lay aside even the relief map, for the time, before it has a chance to become an old and threadbare story. Few mottoes are more useful to a teacher than this: "There are other days to come."

The teacher should not always plan these surprises by himself. A new plan is doubly effective if some scholar joins him in presenting it. Young people are almost always more interested in one another's acts than in the deeds of their elders. Whenever, therefore, you can persuade a scholar to do some conspicuously new thing, count safely on that for the surprise of the day. It may be a recitation of some finely appropriate poem, well committed to memory. It may be the reading of an essay. It may be the exhibition of a carefully prepared map or of a large and skillfully made drawing of some Palestine landscape. Whatever it is, though it be crude and hesitant, it will surprisingly interest and stimulate the class.

Sometimes an outsider may be introduced, bringing with him the surprise element. He may give a little talk on the lesson, which will hold attention by its novelty when a like monologue from the teacher would be a

stupid blunder. He may question the class. He may exhibit some object brought from the Holy Land, or tell of his visit to the place under discussion. I do not think that many Sunday-school teachers make wise use of this inspiring element — the fresh faces and voices of outsiders.

Lessons should be introduced in different ways. A monotonous beginning sets the keynote of monotony for the whole hour. Start sometimes with a sharp question; again, with a bright anecdote; again, with a striking quotation; again, with a poem beautifully recited; again, with an abrupt exclamation. No minute of the lesson repays thoughtful and ingenious planning better than the first minute.

The minute next in importance is the last minute. Your use of it determines the impression the entire lesson is to leave behind. If you let it fray out into a confused gathering of papers and wraps and a bustling for pennies, you may have driven a nail, but you have not clinched it. This close should be planned in advance, with a careful thought for variety. Now you may show the class an impressive picture illustrating the lesson, carefully reserved for that time. Now you may repeat a bit of verse that gathers up the teachings of the hour. Now you may ask that all heads be bowed while you offer a prayer that God will help them carry out in their lives the lesson teachings. And now you may give each a sealed letter, not to be opened till they reach home, tenderly urging upon them the love of the Saviour. Ah, it pays to plan for that last precious minute!

And into all that comes between the first minute and

the last you may work the element of surprise. For example, if you have brought some illustrative object, such as the model of an ancient lamp, do not set it baldly on the table, but bring it in mysterious wrappings, not to be removed till the proper time. If you have a picture to show, keep it strictly face downward until you are ready to introduce it. If you have a map or a drawing or a diagram upon the class blackboard, pin a paper over it at the start. You may even pin over it a series of papers, so that the design, whatever it is, may be progressively uncovered as the lesson proceeds.

Every phase of teaching offers a chance for variety. Is it the questions? They may be oral or written. They may be placed on the blackboard or on slips of paper. The scholars may prepare and ask the questions. One scholar may question the class. The class may divide into sides and have a question tournament. The questions in the quarterly may be used. The game of twenty questions may be adapted. There may be a question-box or an answer-box. The class may take their turn and question the teacher. Questions may be drawn by lot. A reward may be offered for the best set of questions brought in by a scholar. Almost endless changes may be rung on this one element of questioning.

Is it the scope of the lesson? Now it may be made chiefly historical, now literary, now evangelistic, now the study of customs may be prominent, now textual study, now a comparison with other parts of the Bible.

Is it the review of events intervening between the last lesson and the present one? Now you may do this by the report of one scholar assigned to the task, now by an essay

prepared by a scholar, now by a Bible reading, now by a reading from some history of Bible times, now by a combination of scholars each telling a portion, now by questioning, now by a diagram.

Is it the application of the lesson to daily life? You may do it by the letters already suggested, or the prayer. You may do it by an anecdote from the stores of biography, or by the recital of your own experience or of your scholars'. They may be asked to do it, in a great variety of ways.

Is it Bible geography? You have the possibility of map-drawing, of memory maps, of outline maps to be filled in, of sand maps, putty maps, pulp maps, of color work, of stereoscopes, of travel clubs.

Is it the comparison with other parts of the Bible? You may have a class committee on the matter. You may vote on the best parallels brought in. You may study Bible-marking. You may plan a system of memory verses. The scholars may make their own Bible indexes.

Is it the review? You may have a map review, an essay review, a picture review, a chart review, a character review, an examination review — in short, a review based upon almost any of the endlessly varied methods you have used during the quarter, any one of which, being applied to the entire series of lessons, will at once attain a novelty quite sufficient for your purpose.

And finally, let me make the most important suggestion of all. There is an element of surprise in the Bible itself, as well as in the way in which it is presented. This is the crowning interest. To arouse it is the goal of all the methods I have described. When it

is roused in each of your scholars, this anxious thought for method becomes at once and forever unnecessary. The scholar has made the great discovery of Bible wealth, and eagerly brings for himself out of that treasury things ever new. Thenceforth, every time he goes to the marvelous volume he is seized by a fresh fascination, and surprised by a new illustration of its unending wisdom and power.

XXI

LESSON NOTE-BOOKS

Everywhere in education note-books, well used, are of the greatest value. College and professional schools could hardly manage without them, and high schools and even grammar and primary schools are learning their value. What the teacher says is far more likely to be remembered if hand joins ear and brain in capturing it and in recording it. Note-books, of course, can never take the place of memory; but they are memory's indispensable aids. And nowadays we have so many things to remember that we do fairly well if, regarding a large number of facts, we merely remember where we have set them down, and can turn to them at our pleasure for future use.

Now, in this particular, as in nearly all others, the Sunday-school teacher will do well to avail himself of the experience of the secular school. Not that our Sunday-school teaching is to be by lectures; far from that. The haranguing teacher is a failure. The wisely questioning and brightly conversing teacher is quite certain to be a success. But the better the teaching, the larger part are note-books likely to play in it.

Note-books have a double use — for the teacher and the scholar. Let us look at the teacher's use of them.

In the first place, as to the book itself, it will have at

least fifty-two pages, one for each lesson of the year. It should have extra pages, for a list of scholars and many incidental memoranda, but our chief concern is with the pages for the lessons.

Head each page with the title of the lesson and the Scripture reference; and, I am old-fashioned enough to add, with the Golden Text, or at least with some wisely chosen Bible key-verse.

You will plan your teaching far ahead, using these blank pages. For instance, take the matter of practical helpfulness to each of your scholars. You have noticed slothfulness in Edith, and want to spur her out of it. You look ahead. Ah! here, on May 13, is just the lesson she needs. You note on that page: "Energy and industry — (Edith)." In the same way you go through your class, fitting the needs and the lesson teachings. Not that you will forget Edith till May 13 comes, nor that on May 13 you will say a word in the class about Edith's failing. But it is a great advantage in teaching, as you will discover, to take special thought for a certain scholar in the teaching of each lesson, and in planning for it and praying for it beforehand. This can hardly be accomplished without some such note-book arranging as I have described.

Again, you will use your lesson note-book for that comprehensive forward look over the lessons which quite doubles their value. The first question regarding each lesson is, "What shall I emphasize? What truth, among the many truths suggested here, shall I cause to stand out in the scholars' apprehension and memory?" On the wise selection of these central truths, and the forcible in-

sistence upon them, depends very largely the teacher's success. You will need to look far ahead, that the truths you choose for emphasis may have relation to one another, may not duplicate one another, but be cumulative. This, again, is hardly to be brought about except by the use of a note-book.

Once more, consider the matter of illustrations. Your lesson note-book will keep steadily in view the topics of your teaching far ahead. If you are a wise teacher you are always on the lookout for teaching material. Every walk through the woods gives you a parable. Every copy of a newspaper gives you an illuminating incident from current history. Every book brings you a fine anecdote or appealing thought. Every day your observation of the men and women around you is rich in illustrative material. Much of this is entirely unsuited to the immediate Sunday-school lessons, and will be altogether lost unless you have this storehouse in which to garner it, placing parable, current event, passage from book or from life, just where it will be most useful, though on a page ten months hence.

As you read your Bible, the lesson note-book will be constantly by your side. Every true teacher knows that the Bible is its own best interpreter. Not a passage you will read but has its bearing on some of the lessons to come. It may not relate to next Sunday's lesson, but to the lesson five months distant. Very well; note it on the proper page, and you have won the strongest ally for the teaching of that lesson when you come to it.

The note-book should be small enough to carry with you — to fit into your vest pocket, if you are a man;

and, if you are a woman, into any apology for a pocket you are lucky enough to have. Carry with it the part of the Bible you study during the year — at least, as far ahead as your pocket allows, madam. For this purpose I strongly recommend every teacher to sacrifice one Bible, cutting it apart and taking from time to time just the selections that are under immediate consideration. Of course, the books are published separately, but they are more bulky in that form.

The chief value of the lesson note-books to the teacher will be in the cultivation of the habit of thinking ahead over the lessons to come. Until you have tried it, you have no idea how this longer consideration enriches the lesson with many helpful thoughts and practical illustrations, how it clarifies its teachings, how it adds force and confidence to your work, and how it binds the lessons together, week to week and month to month. Faithfully use your note-books, and you will come to regard them as your chief pedagogical aid.

And now let us see how the note-book helps the scholar.

The scholar's note-book, especially at the start, should be only large enough to contain notes on a quarter's lessons, and then a fresh start with a new book. Sixteen pages is right, and the teacher may have the class meet and spend a pleasant hour making their own note-books, supplying the headings, and ornamenting the covers.

Many incidental gains will come from the use of these note-books, not the least being the drill in neatness and accuracy which the teacher may give by means of them. Inspire a pride in keeping them. Have an exhibition of them once a year, as part of the definite results which

the school will be able to show to the church. The scholars will put themselves into their note-books, and the teacher will not only discern their character more clearly himself, but be able also to point it out to the scholar, for his correction of faults and increase of excellencies.

But, after all, the chief gain from the note-books is their aid to memory. The teacher will indicate very plainly, especially at first, just what he wants the scholars to record in their note-books. He will take pains to have something, perhaps many things, for their note-books at each lesson, so as to get them into the habit of bringing the books. The teacher, too, will take frequent occasion to refer to former entries in the note-books, and will set the scholars to consulting them.

It may be best, until the scholars have become expert at note-taking, to have them make rough notes in pencil, which they will carefully copy into their books at home, using ink. Thus the impression on the memory will be deepened by repetition. Whatever course is taken, the teacher should read over his scholars' note-books at least once a month, to correct errors in spelling and statement, and to reform any carelessness and untidiness.

What is to be written in the note-books? Of course, I can only indicate some of the uses to be made of them. The teacher will continually devise new ones.

The books will contain lists that the scholars are to learn — any series of facts, such as the order of the kings of Israel, the leading facts in Elijah's life, any set of dates, any collection of Bible texts, any cross references. If the teacher wishes a particular amount or kind of

work to be done during the week to come, his request will be set down in the note-books. If the lesson just taught included any truth which the teacher wishes especially to emphasize, he will impress it by requiring it to be put into the note-books.

Sometimes the note-books will be utilized for material regarding the life of the hero you are studying — material that can be incorporated in a little biography which each scholar is writing. Sometimes they will be preparing a brief history of the period you are studying, and the note-books will provide matter for it. Sometimes the note-books will preserve interesting geographical data, or facts about Oriental customs, or explanations of unusual and obscure phrases.

Sketch maps, copied from the teacher's, will find place in the note-books. Routes will be plotted upon these. All sorts of diagrams will be recorded. Data for charts will be given, which the scholar is to put into shape at home. Drawings will be copied, showing, for instance, the shape of an Eastern cruse or an Oriental lamp.

Indeed, there is hardly any division of pedagogic art which will not be glad of the note-book's assistance. The teacher that once introduces this simple aid will wonder how he managed without it. The indefinite will become definite, and the evanescent will be rendered permanent. It is one of the littles that make great.

XXII

PEDAGOGICAL RUTS

In a way, the Sunday-school teacher's work is monotonous. He must meet about the same set of scholars in the same place, at the same time, and his lessons are always from the same book. To a poor teacher this becomes wearisome; and, after plodding for a while through the routine, he gives up the work in disgust. But a good teacher finds endless and fascinating variety. The spice of life furnishes constant incentive for his labors. Nothing in his work is stale or flat, and so nothing is unprofitable. Each lesson is a fresh road, whose windings present novel delights at every turn.

"Getting into ruts,"— that is a prime peril of pedagogy. The wagon drags. The wheels are up to the hubs. It is poke, poke, poke, and it is creak, creak, creak. The driver is lucky if a wheel is not wrenched off or an axle broken. To get out of ruts if one is in them, or keep out of ruts if one has thus far avoided them, is one of the first desires of any teacher that knows his business.

One of the pedagogical ruts is the use, year after year, of the same lesson helps. It is astonishing how few teachers possess any reference library whatever, while still fewer make it a rule to add at least one new book to their collection with each new quarter — some book most likely to give information and inspiration for the

quarter's teaching. With the new book come new views, broader views. These lead to new methods. The teacher is quickened, the scholars are quickened. It is a wise superintendent that recommends such a book to his teachers every quarter, learns its price, and obtains so many orders for it that he can get it at reduced cost. That will lift his school out of one pedagogical rut.

Another rut for a teacher to avoid is sameness of preparation for his teaching. Thousands of teachers merely read the lesson text and no other Scripture, and then hastily scan what their quarterly has to say about it; that is all. Sameness in preparation, however full the preparation may be, leads to sameness of presentation. Though the teacher's preparation be theoretically the best, there is a better; and that is, occasionally, something different. This week let him merely read the portion of the Bible involved in the lesson, and then go off and think it over, through the days before his teaching. At another time let him make it a point to *talk* it over, with as many as he can persuade to discuss the lesson with him. Still another week, let him carefully write out a lesson scheme, with all the questions, facts, illustrations, and applications. Persistent variations in the mode of preparation will certainly lead to freshness of treatment in the class, and one more rut will be overcome.

Starting to teach always in the same way — ah, that is a serious pedagogical rut! It brands the lesson with dull uniformity at the very outset. "What was the subject of our last lesson, children? And what is the subject of this lesson?" It is safe to say that thousands of teachers will begin next Sunday with this time-blunted

formula. A wise teacher, on the contrary, if he makes sure of nothing else in his preparation, will devise for each lesson a brisk new beginning. Questions, startling statements, pictures, maps, anecdotes, essays, objects, diagrams, charts — each of these may be made in turn the basis of this introduction. Ingenuity will grow with exercise, and soon it will happen that, whatever may befall the pedagogical carryall later in the teaching period, it will be certain to keep out of the ruts during the critical first five minutes.

The question rut is another snare for the teacher. I mean the question cast in the same invariable form, such as, "What do you know about —" this or that; or, "What does our lesson tell us about —" almost anything. I once had a teacher whose question formula, unchanged through the lesson hour and from day to day, was, "Is it, or is it not true, Wells, that —" and then would follow the fact to which he desired an obedient assent, which, of course, he always obtained. The teacher should study his questions with the most assiduous care, seeking force and clearness and variety. Writing out the questions in advance, until versatility is gained, is not taking too much pains. It is not without great painstaking that one can escape from this pedagogical rut.

Perhaps the deepest and most mischievous rut into which a teacher can fall is sameness in his teaching methods. For how many teachers is this the lack-luster routine: "Johnny, you may read v. 21." "Now, Johnny, what lesson do you draw from that verse?" "Very good. Mary, you may read v. 22." "Now, Mary, what lesson do you draw from that verse?" Perhaps the questions

in the quarterly will be read, with the same inflection, and with proper pauses for the replies. If this description applies to any teacher, let him reform, or expect the early demise of his class. There is imperative need of one novelty in teaching methods every Sunday; and one novelty is enough. It may be a map journey, or a question tournament carried on like a spelling-bee, or an essay by one of the scholars, or the scholars may take turns questioning, or some object illustrative of the lesson may be made in the class. The greater part of the lesson period may be spent in the accustomed way, but the introduction of one little innovation will suffice to lift it from the ruts; and this bit of enterprise will lead to improved methods throughout the teacher's work.

Sameness of manner is another rut for the teacher to avoid. With some it is "the smile that won't come off." With others it is a dull, level voice. With others it is an impassive face. With still others it is a nervous jerkiness intended for sprightliness, but sadly missing the mark. A teacher should see himself as his scholars see him. His manner should vary with his theme. The manner during the lesson on the Cana miracle is very different from the manner that befits the teaching of the great test on Mount Carmel. This variety of manner comes from absorption in the lesson story. If you get into its spirit it will shine out, a different manner for every different subject.

A very important part of the teacher's work is setting the scholars to work at home; and here also, if the teachers do anything at all, they are likely to do it monotonously. "Have you read over the lesson? Have you studied your

lesson? Have you learned the Golden Text?" These are quite certain to be the inquiries. Much ingenuity is needed to provide for the scholars definite tasks, varied with each lesson, and much tact is required to get the students to undertake those tasks; but in no matter is the expenditure of ingenuity and tact more profitable. There are many ways of setting the scholars to work, as in asking them to write paraphrases of the lesson, or thirty-word condensations of it, or sets of questions for the teacher to use, or three-minute essays on assigned subjects. They may be persuaded to come to the teacher's home to study the lesson together. They may be told that some one of their number is to ask the questions next Sunday, and they are all to study so as to be able to do it. Indeed, a great variety of these methods of stimulating home study may be used.

Sameness in review methods is another pedagogical rut. It usually consists chiefly of a spiritless calling of the list of lesson subjects, followed by "What do you remember of that lesson, Susy?" Each review has a character of its own, as its lessons are different from those of other quarters; therefore it needs a different treatment. Sometimes you may review with a list of selected questions, written on slips of paper, which the scholars will draw by lot. Sometimes each may be told to prepare to question the class on a certain lesson, and to answer questions on all the lessons. Sometimes the teacher may prepare a set of topics, each of which requires a study of all the lessons, and may assign these to different scholars. Sometimes you may review by movable numbers on a map, each number standing for an event of the quarter

which occurred there. These reviews may be indefinitely varied.

A serious rut is sameness of scholars. Some teachers make no effort to increase the size of their classes. They plod along, year after year, with the same scholars assigned to them at the beginning; and if some of them drop out, they sigh — and have the janitor put in one chair less. A teacher should always be reaching out for recruits. He will never have a large enough class. He will set his scholars to drawing in their friends. He will understand how delightfully even a single new scholar will help to lift his class out of the ruts.

A monotonous relation to the scholars retards many teachers' labors. When their scholars are sick or have been absent from the school, they may visit them at their homes; otherwise they see them only at the class. Every teacher needs to put himself often in fresh relations with his scholars. Invite them to your house. Take pleasant walks with them. Go off with them on jolly excursions, to museums, Indian mounds, high hills. Write letters to them. Go camping with them. Play games with them. Pray with them. See all sides of their lives, and let them see all sides of your life.

Then, there is a monotonous way of presenting Christ. What a sad rut is this for a teacher to fall into! "Do you consider yourself a Christian?" This is a stock question. Or it may be, "Don't you want to come out on the Lord's side?" Or, "Don't you want to take a stand for Jesus?" We need to think, with each lesson, how to use that lesson, easily and naturally, for inducing decisions for Christ, or for making Christ a more real

influence in the lives of those that have formally entered His service. Let us do it in unhackneyed, unartificial ways, as if we were introducing a dear friend. No two scholars are to be approached in the same way, because no two scholars have the same needs and the same longings. Find out what each should get from Christ and give to Christ; then make your appeal along those lines, and you will be quite certain to succeed.

A sameness of aim will hurt your teaching — merely the ambition to get through the whole lesson during the lesson period, or to hold the interest of your scholars. Your aim should vary continually with the continually varying needs of your class. Now it will be to bring a certain scholar to Christ; again, to give the class a substantial outline knowledge of a certain subject; again, to cultivate in the scholars a certain grace or virtue. These definite but changing purposes will do wonders for the force and exhilaration of your teaching.

And, finally, the teacher needs a variety of motives, if his work is to win the highest success. Too many teachers are moved merely by a dogged sense of duty, or by a dull and flabby hope of good results. Pray often, teachers! Love ardently, teachers! Seek the continual presence of the Holy Spirit, bringing the things of Christ and showing them to you. With His help alone can you get out of the ruts and keep out of them. Let every valley — and that means every rut — be filled up, and let it become the highway of the Lord!

XXIII

HOW SOCRATES TAUGHT

Jesus Christ is not only the Sunday-school teacher's main theme; He is his chief model for the difficult art of teaching. And next to the divine Teacher, we find our most helpful exemplars in other Bible characters, notably Paul and the Old Testament prophets. The Sunday-school teacher will never exhaust the pedagogic hints that are to be found in his Text-book.

Though all this is true — and I, certainly, would yield to no man in emphasizing it — yet it would be foolish for us to neglect the great lessons in wise ways of teaching to be learned from teachers outside the Bible. One of the noblest of these instructors is the old Greek philosopher, Socrates — a man so wise and so noble that some have not hesitated to compare him blasphemously with our Lord Himself. Every one that attempts to teach others, youths or adults, should be familiar with the ideas and methods of Socrates. What are some of these, and how will they help us to teach our modern boys and girls?

Well, in the first place, Socrates was absolutely sincere, simple, and unpretending. These are splendid qualities in a teacher. Strangers always found in him more than they expected. His talk was a constant surprise, even to Plato and Xenophon and his other intimates. Bare-

footed, hatless, coatless, pale of face, flat of nose, protuberant of stomach, Socrates was the reverse of showy. He began his conversations hesitatingly, apologetically. But before he had talked five minutes he had his crowd.

If any of us are fussing over exteriors in this matter of teaching — if we think that fine garments or fine words or elegant manners are necessary to make an impression on our scholars, a little study of Socrates will set us right. The heart! The head! Love your scholars and teach them! You need no other charm.

The second feature in Socrates' way of teaching was his application of the same principle to others. Unpretending himself, he abhorred pretense in others. In his famous discussions with the scholars and philosophers of his day, his first step was almost invariably to convict them of ignorance.

The oracle at Delphi had once declared that Sophocles was wise, Euripides wiser, but the wisest of all men was Socrates. Our humble philosopher was conscious of deep ignorance, as all wise men are; but he laughed off the oracle's statement by asserting that he was wiser than others only in this: that he knew his own ignorance, but others did not know theirs!

Socrates made many enemies by his merciless process of exposing the ignorance of men, and these enemies became numerous and powerful enough to procure his death. Perhaps he foresaw the result, but it would have made no difference if he did. Socrates had taken up the work of teaching, and he knew that he could not teach anything to any man if the man was sure that he knew it already.

After the same fashion the modern teacher must clear

the ground before him, removing from his scholars' minds all conceit of knowledge that is not possessed. "Where is Jerusalem?" Do not be satisfied with the easy answer, "In Palestine," unless you are sure that your scholars know where Palestine is, and what it is. "Point toward Jerusalem." "How would you go to Palestine from here?" "How far would Palestine reach across our State?" "Can you walk twenty miles a day? How long would it take you to walk the length of Palestine?" "How much of the eastern Mediterranean shore does it occupy?" "To what empire does it belong?" "In which part of Palestine is Jerusalem?" Continue these questions and repeat them, until, with the help of the globe and maps, you are sure that Palestine and Jerusalem have real location to your scholar's apprehension. You will not go far in the process, with many scholars, without discovering much confusion, not to say blank ignorance, even on this fundamental point of Bible geography. Your scholars will not be pleased to perceive how little they know, nor you to perceive how little you have taught; but there is no other way.

Socrates was the real discoverer of the definition. He was the first to insist upon its value, if men are to think and speak accurately. How many misunderstandings would be avoided if in all our talking together on disputed points we were always to begin with definitions! Agreement on those would usually show us that, after all, we think alike. But some of us urge that faith is the essential, and not works, and others that works are essential, and not faith, while all the time each of us has different

definitions of works and faith, and we are not talking about the same things at all.

For instance, if some one were to meet Socrates on one of our American streets, and casually ask him, "Do you think it right for the government to tax the selling of liquor?" he would hardly get an immediate answer from the philosopher. At once Socrates would begin to probe for a definition. "What do you mean by a government?" the sage would ask. "What are its purposes? Who make it up? Whence comes its power? What do you mean by taxing? What are the purposes of taxation? Whence comes authority to tax? What is temperance? What is intemperance? What promotes the first? What causes the second?" Socrates would not go near your main question until every one of these fundamentals had been thoroughly discussed, and some sort of answer agreed upon. Even then he would probably remain provokingly silent, and leave you to draw a just conclusion from the principles you had reached, which would not be at all difficult to do.

Now of course I do not intend to suggest the adoption of this method *in toto* in your Sunday-school teaching, but the main idea is continually to be kept in view. Be sure that you and your scholars know what you are talking about. Sin, salvation, repentance, forgiveness, inspiration, miracle, parable, immortality, righteousness — such great terms are constantly used in Sunday-school teaching, and often, I fear, with little definite understanding. Socrates knew, and we should know, that to get one great thought clearly into a man's head is a good

morning's work. Let us follow his example in our zeal for definitions.

One other particular in which we may wisely follow the teaching ways of Socrates is his use of illustrations from common things. Like our Lord, he saw parables everywhere. In this he was quite unlike the pompous rhetoricians of his day, who scorned to introduce butchers and meat and ships' helms into their elegant harangues, and who ridiculed the homely similes wherewith Socrates clinched his arguments.

Here, for instance, is the way Socrates used the argument from design, to prove that there is an intelligent Creator: "The eyes are weak, but they have two doors to protect them, open when we will, closed when we sleep. Isn't that an evidence of design? Then, the eyelashes grow over them, to strain out the dust from the wind; and the eyebrows jut out over them to hold back the perspiration from the forehead. Yes, and the ear receives all sounds, and is never filled; what do you think of that? And the front teeth cut up the food, while the back teeth receive it from them and grind it finer! And the mouth, through which we take in food, is placed near the eyes and the nose that judge the food!" In that way Socrates went on, developing from these common things his proof that there is a good God who made us.

I hardly think Sunday-school teachers even yet are well aware of the immense value of illustrations — yes, the necessity of them, if our teaching is to be vital. But illustrations out of a book are of far less value (though they are useful) than illustrations that we have picked up for ourselves from the scenes around us, from our own experi-

ences and the lives of our scholars. An illustration from your backyard is worth ten illustrations from India. A comparison to some happening in your town is worth all the similes in Shakespeare. Observe and reflect. Venture upon the commonplace. You have no less an authority and example than Socrates.

But the feature of Socrates' teaching methods that the world has most admired and sought to imitate was his questioning. Indeed, when we speak of "the Socratic method" that is what we generally mean: bringing out the truth by a long series of persistent, connected questions. Socrates never lectured; he simply conversed. He taught by dialogues.

When an artist would mold the clay into a form of beauty, he shapes the image by a thousand delicate pressings here and pullings there, adding and subtracting as the growing realization of the idea demands. Suppose he had united all those little pats and pulls into one mighty blow; where would have been the image? Yet just this grotesque mistake is made by those who imagine that the delivery of a harangue is teaching.

The ideal recitation is a conversation; but it must be a real conversation, in which both teacher and scholar are thinking. In our class, for instance, we may wish to instruct the pupils in the folly of being angry with disagreeable people, and we may ask: "Johnny, suppose you should say 'Good morning' to somebody, and he should look off and not answer; you ought not to be angry, ought you?"

Johnny: "No, sir."

One lesson taught, and easily taught: Johnny's con-

duct will not probably be materially changed! But here is the way Socrates taught that lesson once:

Socrates: "You're gloomy to-day, my friend. What's the matter?"

Friend: "I just passed Lysias, and I said 'Good morning' pleasantly; but the sullen boor only scowled and walked on."

Socrates: "Well, my friend, suppose you had passed a lame man, would you have been angry at his lameness?"

Friend: "No, of course not. Why should I?"

Socrates: "Or suppose Lysias had been sick with some terrible disease; would you have been mad at him for that?"

Friend: "Certainly not. What of it, Socrates?"

Socrates: "Well, then, my dear friend, why, pray, should you get angry when you meet a man with a diseased soul?"

That lesson will not be forgotten.

Read the dialogues of Socrates, as reported by Plato and in the "Memorabilia" and "Symposium" by Xenophon, and you will gain a superb teaching stimulus along many lines, but chiefly along this of the wise use of conversation. The interrogation point may well be adopted as the symbol of the teacher's art. If you are in the habit of spending three hours in reading for your Sunday's teaching, storing up a mass of facts, comments, and anecdotes to unload upon your admiring pupils, take my advice: spend only half the time in gaining your material, and spend the other half in considering how you can best present it, in framing your questions so that they will

arouse interest, hold attention, and elicit and develop the scholars' thought. That is teaching. Anything else is lecturing.

One should not close even a brief account of Socrates' teaching without a word about the lofty motives that impelled it. He was an ardent lover of the truth, one of the most sincere and earnest that ever lived. He inspired the same love of truth in his pupils, notably Plato. He lived solely to discover the truth and show it to others. When persecution came because of the truth, he did not swerve a hair's breadth. When his enemies brought him to trial on charges absurdly false, he adopted no compromising tone toward his judges. Rather than yield a jot of the truth he drank the fatal hemlock, engaging to the very last in the high converse to which he had given his life.

What a splendid Christian he would have made! How gladly he would have followed Him who was the Truth incarnate! With what joy, guided by the Light of the World, he would have walked and leaped where he was obliged dimly to grope! Truly in heaven Socrates must be filled with gladness when he learns that the methods of teaching which he employed with a power so original and bold are now set to the service of the one true God, whom having not known he served.

XXIV

HOW TO TEACH TIMID SCHOLARS

What Sunday-school class but contains at least one timid member? Most classes contain several of them. From such scholars the teacher finds it hard to get satisfactory replies, while any real insight into their soul troubles and mental perplexities is quite out of the question. The timid scholar shrinks from the teacher, and there is none of that vital contact of life which is the essence of genuine teaching. It would be hard, therefore, to name a theme that is more important for teachers than just this: how to turn the timid, bashful, reserved scholar into the scholar that, with all modesty, yet meets the teacher half way, and frankly and fully discloses what he knows and thinks and feels.

Timidity is a real misfortune in life. Unless the scholar is helped to conquer it, he will find it a hindrance in all his undertakings and a constant sorrow to him. It will prevent his making the most of his powers, and accomplishing what otherwise he might accomplish in the world. If the teacher can aid the bashful scholar to overcome his timidity, he will do him a lifelong service. For the child's sake, therefore, as well as to promote his own work as a teacher, every Sunday-school instructor is bound to wage war against timidity.

Timidity is to be recognized as an unnatural condition

in children. It is natural for them to be frank and open, ready and even eager to tell all they know and ask questions about what they do not know. That is the normal method of growth in the normal child's mind. Talk is the child's university, in which during his first decade he learns far more than during all the rest of his life. A timid child is to be studied to see what is wrong, in him or in the conditions of his life. The remedy for the evil will probably be quite different in every case.

To discover the cause of timidity the teacher must come into close personal contact with the child. These are just the children with whom, because of their shrinking, it is especially hard to come into close contact. The attempt must be made by getting the scholar alone. The value of quiet talks with a scholar is hardly to be overestimated in any instance, but most of all when the scholar is too bashful to disclose his thoughts in a company. Take a walk with the scholar, invite him to your home, or obtain his company on some pleasant excursion, and you will make more progress with him in an hour than otherwise in a year.

And then, if you would learn the cause of the scholar's timidity, you must learn his home surroundings. Ten minutes' talk with his father or mother may show you that the scholar's timidity is inherited, and therefore exceedingly difficult to overcome. Or, you may discover that the unfortunate child is repressed by his parents and other members of his family, is snubbed and ridiculed and in every way driven within his shell. The teacher may do the child an inestimable service by talking with his parents about his timidity and asking their help in con-

quering it, thus opening their eyes to the wrong they are doing the boy or girl.

Perhaps the teacher may come to see that he himself is the object of the child's fear, that his scholar expresses himself freely except in the teacher's presence. In that case, the teacher must lay loving siege to the affection of that scholar. He must try in every way to prove himself a true and sympathetic friend. He must discover the scholar's aspirations and seek to further them. He must make himself of genuine service to the scholar, in some way, and make manifest the reality of his interest in him.

More often than any other cause, it is unkind treatment received from his comrades that produces the reserve of the timid scholar. They have called him "goody-goody" when he has expressed some desire for the best in life or some interest in religious matters; or perhaps he has made some blunder and they have laughed at him, and with the mercilessness of childhood they have pelted him for days with sarcastic references to the mistake.

To remedy this difficulty the teacher must cultivate in his class the spirit of good cheer. Get as much fun as possible into every recitation. Try to introduce into the class work the zest of a game. Make your scholars forget themselves in their interest in their studies, and with that forgetting the timid ones will lose their timidity.

Then, try to arouse in your class the spirit of hearty appreciation. Speak now and then to one scholar about the progress of another scholar. Silent hand-clapping may be encouraged, to show the approval of the class when one of the number has made a good answer. It will help

to this end if you can persuade the members of the class to study the lesson together, in couples. If a mischievous scholar has been making fun of a timid scholar, set the two to studying together. Better still, induce the timid scholar to study with a stupid or ignorant scholar, and the discovery of how much more he knows than the other, and the experience of helping and teaching, will contribute decidedly toward his much-needed confidence.

If any pupil laughs at the blunder of a bashful scholar, turn upon him sharply and ask him to give the correct statement. If he succeeds, continue to question him till you have arrived at a point of ignorance; then ask him how he would like to be laughed at for it. In such ways as this give the class little lessons in courtesy.

Sometimes the timid scholar hesitates to express himself because he is on novel ground and not sure of himself there. Therefore the value of frequent reviews, great in the case of all scholars, is much increased in the case of the timid scholar. For his sake especially, go over the ground of the lessons often, and in many ways. The more familiar he becomes with the subject, the more likely he is to speak freely on it.

Occasionally the timid scholar hesitates to answer, not because of the question itself, but because of what he fears is behind it; he feels that he is getting into deep water. To meet this form of the difficulty written work is invaluable. When the timid scholar is confronted by a set of written questions, he gladly recognizes his chance to be at his best. Such tests bring out his real knowledge. There, at least, he is on the same

footing as his comrades. Indeed, he is quite likely to do better than they do in this written work, and such an achievement gives him a fine access of courage.

When you decide that the timid scholar's difficulty is born of ignorance, that he is really behind his classmates in knowledge, then your best plan is to study with the scholar alone. There is little time in the class for attention to individuals. Get the pupil by himself, and you will quickly discover what it is that he does not comprehend, and you can soon place him on a level of attainment with the rest of the class, and therefore on a level of confidence.

Another help, if the scholar's timidity is caused by ignorance, is for the teacher to introduce often into the recitation matters that he is sure the scholar knows about, and then call on him to speak on those points. Thus the lesson may be illustrated by some happening in the life of that scholar, some place he has visited, something he has seen. Telling about it will make the scholar feel necessary and important, and that feeling is a remedy for timidity.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the value of praise in this struggle with a scholar's timidity. Especially if the timidity has its origin in ignorance of the subject, or in fear of the teacher or the scholars, or in distrust of self, generous praise will help to overcome it. The teacher should seek eagerly for chances to praise this pupil honestly. Ask him very easy questions, so as to get answers whose correctness you can commend. Learn first what the scholar can do or tell, and then call upon him to do it or tell it. Praise him before the class. Praise

him when he is alone. Praise him to his parents. Praise him in a friendly letter. Make it generous praise, unspoiled by any reference to the timidity you are seeking to conquer; no such addition as, "Now you see how well you can do; why won't you always do it?" Often a course in praise is all that is needed to cure the worst case of awkwardness and reserve.

If you yourself ever suffered from timidity, tell the scholar about your experience, and how you got the better of your bashfulness. Indeed, very likely you still have this enemy to fight, and can draw your scholar very close to you by a revelation of a common difficulty and the sense of a common struggle.

Recognize the fact, however, that it is impossible for you to help your scholars to overcome timidity if you are timid in their presence, or frosty and reserved. Let yourself out. Be frank. Be unconstrained. Set the class an example of readiness, and openness of heart. It may be hard to attain this, but, once attained, it will be of priceless value to you and to your scholars.

Teach the timid scholar to analyze the situation. Is he afraid of Tom Jones? Not a bit! Or of Bill Edwards? Pooh! Or of Ned Saunders? Of course not! Then why should he be afraid of these playmates and friends when they come together in a class? This argument will be found quite effective.

A capital plan is to see the day-school teacher of the timid scholar and compare notes. Perhaps that teacher has learned just the method with this pupil that you have been seeking. Hear the scholar recite in the public school and watch him with his mates there; you will be sure to

get an inkling of the situation that may lead you to victory.

Finally, do not forget that whatever you can do to render the Sunday-school lesson more interesting operates in just that measure to do away with bashfulness. If he is wholly absorbed in the lesson, the most timid scholar will forget his reserve, and will answer questions and ask them with freedom and delight.

If, in these ways or in any other way, you can lead a timid, awkward, suffering child into self-confidence, into the free, glad ability to do his very best and appear his best before his fellows, what joy will be yours, and his! You will have blessed him beyond measure. Indeed, yours will have been half the making of his life.

XXV

THREE TEACHING DEVICES

1. My "Time-Stick."

It proved to be a most useful instrument for teaching the Acts, but it would be quite as useful in teaching any other historical portion of the Bible. I used it in a class of girls aged about thirteen, but it will be equally serviceable anywhere in the intermediate department.

The time-stick is a wooden ruler, flat, a little more than an inch wide, and a foot long. I carried it in my pocket to the school.

On one side I fastened with mucilage a strip of white, unglazed, unlined, rather thick paper, pressing it down over night so that it would be perfectly smooth. The whole side of the ruler was covered.

The right-hand edge was then divided into forty parts, one for each year of the Acts, from A. D. 30 to A. D. 70. The division marks were made carefully with ink, one-eighth of an inch long, the mark at each five years being three-eighths of an inch long, and the mark at each ten years being three-fourths of an inch long. The number of each year was neatly and clearly printed in ink.

With a small brad-awl I next made holes for the events of the Acts as far as the lessons had gone. For instance, the year 30 had five holes, arranged diagonally from left to right and each a little lower than the one before it.

These were for the ascension, the choice of Matthias, Pentecost, the healing of the lame man, and the trial of Peter and John. The next hole came (rather arbitrarily, as I explained) at 32, and represented the tragical fate of Ananias and Sapphira. Thus we went on down the stick as the lessons progressed.

In using the time-stick I place it on the table with a little box of pins, and indicate a scholar. She takes up a pin, says, "The first event of the Acts was the ascension," and inserts a pin in the first hole. This pin is one with a large blue head, to symbolize the sky into which Christ rose! The next scholar indicated says, "The second event in the Acts was the choice of Matthias to succeed Judas," and inserts a plain pin. The third scholar puts into the third hole a "gold" (I fear it is a brass) pin, to symbolize the golden light of Pentecost. Black-headed pins, two in one hole, are used for the death of Ananias and Sapphira, and will be used for any account of a death. When we came to the zealous Paul, all the events in which he takes part were marked with red-headed pins. Heads of different colors may be given to pins by dipping them in sealing-wax. The times when the different Epistles were written were indicated also by pins, but these pins bore little bits of paper on which were printed the contractions of the names of the books.

Besides the exercise I have described, the insertion of the pins, they may be withdrawn in the same way, the event being named with each pin that is pulled out. It will be well to have them withdrawn in reversed order, the latest date first. A more difficult exercise would be the insertion of each pin at random, the teacher pointing to

any one of the holes and the scholar placing a pin there and naming the proper event. The pins may also be withdrawn at random.

This time-stick is useful because it fixes the chronological order of the events by a sort of picture in the mind. It furnishes a convenient form for frequent review. Moreover, there is an element of play in the plan, and the children thoroughly enjoy it.

2. My Peg Map.

My peg map is a perfectly delightful contrivance. I want every teacher to know about it and make one for his own use. It may be used for almost any series of lessons, but I will describe it as I first used it in a year of studies in the Acts and the journeys of Paul.

I took a map extending from Jerusalem to Damascus and to Rome. That included the country to be covered during the year. You can easily find such a map in the teachers' and scholars' helps, but it will be far better if you will take time and pains to make the map yourself, because then you will use merely the outlines, and you will insert only the places with which the lessons are concerned. Moreover, you will insert them as they are reached in the course of the lessons.

Paste this map neatly upon a thin block of wood. The whole thing can be carried in your pocket — if you are a man and have a pocket.

At each town bore a hole with a small gimlet or awl, and make a lot of wooden pegs to fit these holes.

Your scholars will use the map thus. You will say, "Tom, you may start Paul on his first missionary jour-

ney." Tom will take a peg, stick it into the Antioch (Syria) hole, and say, "Paul started on his first missionary journey at Antioch in Syria." At the same time Tom will take up a red cord with a loop on the end, and will place the loop on the peg.

"Philip, you may carry the journey on," you say, and Philip inserts a peg close by the first, saying, "Paul (and Barnabas) went first to Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch." At the same time Philip carries on the cord and gives it a twist around the Seleucia peg.

Then the cord is carried on to Salamis in Cyprus, where the third peg is placed; then across the island to the fourth peg at Paphos; then again to Perga in Pamphylia, and so on. Finally it returns on itself, using the same pegs, and gets back to Antioch.

When you come to the second missionary journey, use a blue cord; and for the third journey use a white cord. For other journeys, as to Jerusalem to attend the council, use some other color.

Review every Sunday the journey which you are studying, having the cord carried on from the beginning. Keep on the map the pegs and cords representing all the journeys as you go on to later ones.

All the journeys involving Paul may be represented by red pegs. If, however, you wish to include in your map the journeys of Peter and Philip, paint their pegs of different colors.

It will be helpful if you make extra holes at the places where Epistles were written and the places where Epistles were received. These may be smaller holes, for the insertion of pins. Upon these pins mount little

wooden arrows, and let the direction of the arrows indicate the course of the Epistles. For example, the Epistle to the Romans was probably written at Corinth. At Corinth, therefore, set up an arrow pointing toward Rome. At Rome set up another arrow pointing inward toward the city, the blunt end pointing toward Corinth.

This device is easily constructed, and you will find that its use widens out in many ways. Moreover, your scholars will take great pleasure in using it, and in the pleasant process will fix the lesson facts so firmly that they will become permanent possessions of their minds.

3. My Chapter Board.

When all the Sunday-school lessons for considerable time lie in one book of the Bible, teachers will wisely devote much time to fixing an outline of that book in their scholars' minds. It should be such an outline that the scholars, when an incident of the history is named, can turn at once to the part of the book where it is related. I do not mean anything elaborate or artificial, dealing with the minutiæ of verses and sections, but a general though perfectly definite idea of the contents of the book.

One year, for example, when the greater part of the lessons were from the Acts and all the lessons were related to that book, I contrived what I call a "chapter board." The naming of chapters, and the fixing in mind of these chapter titles is a well-known and in most cases a perfectly satisfactory method of effecting the end in view. The only difficulty is to interest the scholars in this work, which is liable to seem to them very dry. My chapter board makes play of it.

This chapter board consists of a piece of soft pine, of a size convenient to carry, into which are driven some brads inclined upward at a slight angle. These brads are arranged in couples, and there are four rows of them, seven couples in each row. Each pair of brads is for one of the twenty-eight chapters of the Acts, and so the numbers, from 1 to 28, are printed in clear black immediately above them.

Then I have twenty-eight oblong pieces of heavy cardboard (pasteboard will do as well, if it has a smooth white surface), one for each chapter, but not numbered. On these I print, in clear black letters, the titles of the chapters, bringing forward a new oblong as soon as we enter a new chapter in our studies. For ease of remembering I use one-word titles whenever possible, and you may like to have my list:

(1) Ascension, (2) Pentecost, (3) Cripple, (4) Trial, (5) Ananias, (6) Deacons, (7) Stephen, (8) Philip, (9) Saul, Æneas, Dorcas, (10) Cornelius, (11) Antioch, (12) Peter, (13) Cyprus, Antioch (Pisidia), (14) Lystra, (15) Council, (16) Macedonia, (17) Thessalonica, Athens, (18) Corinth, (19) Ephesus, (20) To Jerusalem, (21) Arrest, (22) Defense, (23) Plots, (24) Felix, (25) Festus, (26) Agrippa, (27) Shipwreck, (28) Rome.

These chapter titles, of course, may be changed if you do not like them, and you may allow your class to suggest different titles for each chapter, and vote for one of them. The pupils will print them neatly at the head of the chapters in their Bibles.

Punch in each oblong piece of cardboard two holes to fit over the two brads (*two,* because they would not hang

straight or steadily with only one hole), and you are ready.

You may hold up the board and say, "Mary, you may place the first chapter." From a box-cover Mary selects the oblong marked "Ascension" and hangs it on the brads marked 1. "Now, Lucy, the second chapter." Thus you will go straight through the book, or as far as the lessons have reached.

After the class has become expert at this, drill it in skipping around. "Ellen, please hang up the fifth chapter." "Now, Jane, chapter ten." And so on.

Another good way is to hand the board to one of the scholars, who will put the chapters in place, one after the other, the rest of the class watching. If she makes a mistake, the others will call out, "Wrong!" and the board must be passed to the scholar next on the left, who will carry it on till she makes a mistake. Too long hesitation will also count as an error.

Another way emphasizes the topics of the chapters in the call, rather than the numbers: "Mary, where is the Dorcas chapter?" Mary finds it in the box-cover, and hangs it in space number 9. "Next, Susan, you may place the Ananias chapter."

Still another way is for the teacher, before the recitation, to hang up all the oblongs face to the board and blank side out. "Josephine," the teacher will say, "you may turn over the Philip chapter." Josephine turns over one of the oblongs; if it is right, she scores one; if it is wrong, she scores an error, and some one else has a chance. The scholar with the most "rights" and the fewest "wrongs" is the victor.

You will doubtless be able to invent other ways of using this device, and you will easily adapt it to any book of the Bible.

XXVI

ORGANIZED CLASSES

What is an organized Sunday-school class? It is a class that has become organic — a body, a living body, of which each person in the class is a member — an eye, or a tongue, or a hand or foot.

The usual class, I fear, is a rope of sand. If it is anything better, it is a string of beads, and the teacher is the string. If the teacher breaks down, away roll the beads. Or, it is a row of steel chips, held together loosely by the teacher's magnetism. If that is removed, the steel chips fall apart instantly.

Therefore the test of an organized class is to lose its teacher and go right on about its business, holding its membership intact, and getting another teacher. That proves the class organic. The perpetuating spirit of organism has possessed it. The magic does not lie in a constitution and a set of officers and committees. The magic lies in this organic spirit that has been formed. Without it, no constitutional paraphernalia is more than a parcel of dry bones.

But a constitution and a set of officers and committees are quite indispensable to an organized class. Rightly used, they embody its spirit of organism, and furnish its means of expression. They constitute the exterior dis-

tinction between a class that is organized and a class that is not.

The constitution should be very simple, perhaps always, certainly at the start. Let it grow from the mere elements of a constitution, and it will be far more likely to have life, to be organic. Let it include sections upon the class name, purpose, motto, relation to the school, membership, teacher, officers, committees, business meetings, elections, quorum, and amendments. These may well be grouped together, with no separation into constitution and by-laws. As I proceed in this discussion I will introduce all the sections of a suggested constitution, urging that the greatest liberty be taken to adapt any suggested constitution to the peculiar needs and desires of the class.

First, then, will come:

"*Article I.— Name.* This shall be called the —— Class of the ———— Sunday School."

The value of a well-chosen class name is inestimable. Enthusiasm may be aroused for "Class No. 6," and memories may cluster about "Class 17," but enthusiasm will be more easily aroused for a happier name, and memories will attach themselves more gratefully to it.

Here is a field for originality. Propose many names to the class, and let the members suggest others; then, after full discussion, let a majority vote settle the matter. You may like to name the class after some famous Bible student or eminent Christian — The Gladstone Class, The Roosevelt Class, The Lincoln Class, The Farrar Class, The Geikie Class, The Trumbull Class. Or, you may prefer the name of some Bible character that is a favorite of the scholars — The Caleb Class, The Gideon Class, The

Miriam Class, The Deborah Class, The Samuel Class, The David Class, The Timothy Class, The Berean Class. Or you may select a more general name — The Friendly Class, The Seekers, The Explorers, The Pioneers, The Searchers, The Bible-Lovers, The Bibliophiles, The Reapers, The Bible-Miners, The Searchlight Club, The Lantern Club, The Jewel Society, The Bible Gem Club. The essential thing is to get a name that appeals to the imagination of the class and will not wear out.

Next are:

"*Article II.— Purpose.* The purpose of this class is to learn all we can about the Bible, and to follow its teachings in our lives, especially by mutual helpfulness.

"*Article III.— Motto.* The motto of the class is, ————."

These articles are self-explanatory. The advantages of a well-chosen motto are the same as those of an inspiring name. It adds one more interest to class life, one more incentive to being and doing, one more tool for the teacher's hand. The motto should be brief and dignified. It may be Biblical, such as "One thing I do," or "The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God"; or it may be drawn from secular sources, as, "Fine thoughts are wealth" (Bailey); or, "Nothing's so hard but search will find it out" (Herrick). Besides a class motto, you may come to have a class hymn, such as Cowper's "A glory gilds the sacred page," and a class banner, and a class emblem with a class pin or button or badge. All these are legitimate and natural outgrowths of the spirit of organism, practically useful as well as pleasing. They should, however, be allowed to grow up rather than be

devised at the outset and incorporated in the constitution; therefore we may pass on to:

"*Article IV.— Relation to the School.* This class is a constituent part of the ———— Sunday School, subject to its rules, and seeking in every way to advance its interests."

Organized classes have this danger: that they may set up independent realms within a realm, thus producing jealousies, misunderstanding, and friction. This article should be adopted honestly, and be kept constantly in view in all the class planning and enterprises.

"*Article V.— Membership.* Any person becomes a member of the class that is proposed by the Membership Committee and elected by a majority vote at any meeting of the class, and that signs the class constitution."

This form of election to the class is not intended as a barrier against possible undesirable members, but to give membership a value in the eyes of the "candidates," and make them realize that they belong to an organization and have assumed duties with relation to it.

"*Article VI.— Teacher.* The class shall elect its teacher for one year, at the annual class business meeting in ————. If the teacher is to be absent, he shall notify the president, and the class will elect a substitute teacher and obtain his services."

Some superintendents may think that this article places too much power in the hands of the class, and may not allow it. In my judgment, however, formed after considerable personal experience and observation, this danger is very much more than offset by the increased loyalty of the class to a teacher whom they have elected

and continue to elect annually, and by their feeling of responsibility for supporting him, while the provision for their choice of a substitute teacher is especially useful. A committee of the class should wait upon the person honored by the invitation and urge his acceptance of it. Undoubtedly such a request will be granted far more readily than if it came from either the superintendent or the teacher, and many a discovery of possible teachers will be made by the courageous enterprise of the young people themselves.

"*Article VII.— Officers.* The officers of the class shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, whose duties will be those usually assigned to such officers."

Upon these officers the wise teacher will lay all the responsibility he can. Thus he will relieve himself and develop them, while making them realize that the class is their own. Insist that the president or vice-president preside whenever business is up. Let him take your place in front of the class. Let the secretary keep all records; and if the teacher also keeps a record, let him keep it to himself! Let the treasurer pay out all money, and only on the vote of the class. This may or may not apply to the regular Sunday contributions of the class, as the school officers direct. I believe, however, that the class will give more liberally, heartily, and intelligently to the causes for which the school asks contributions if it does so by vote. These officers will be held responsible for the order of the class, and for all the management of class affairs, leaving the teacher free to devote himself to the teaching; though of course in all matters the teacher will

be, when necessary, the power behind these various thrones.

"*Article VIII.— Committees.* The standing committees shall be a membership committee, to seek new members, propose their names, and introduce them to the class; an invitation committee, to invite to the class all they can from the Sunday congregations and elsewhere; and a social committee, to plan and conduct the class socials. Each committee shall consist of a chairman and two other members."

While, of course, the teacher will be on the lookout for new members, he will know that the membership committee can persuade them to join better than he can, since they can speak most freely and convincingly about the interest of the class and the helpfulness of the teacher.

The invitation committee may well divide the church auditorium among them, each to look after a certain section of it. They should not only invite the strangers, but accompany them to the class and introduce them.

The class socials should be held monthly, at the homes of the members. There should be refreshments, to break up formality, but they should be limited strictly to the simplest kind, such as nuts and apples, or cake and lemonade. Games should be played, there should be singing, but the chief interest should center around the topic, whatever it is, that most pleases the class — athletic, musical, literary, or practical. For example, I once had an organized class of young men who took turns at their socials in telling about their occupations. The banker's clerk gave us an evening in a bank (figuratively speaking); the commercial traveler for a shoe firm told us how

shoes are made, bringing them in all stages; the fish-dealer told us most entertainingly about fish; perhaps the most instructive evening, unexpectedly, was furnished by a clerk in a men's furnishing store, who brought his samples of the newest garments and accessories! If you do not adopt this plan, you may base your socials on current events, or natural history studies, or studies of art or of missions. Strangers may sometimes be invited, to interest them in the class. Joint socials may be held with other classes similarly organized.

These are the fundamental committees, but you should have as many committees as you can work (and no more), and it is a good plan to place every member of the class upon some committee. One of the best organized classes I know has an instruction committee. Such a committee, in an adult class, may even propose courses of study and lesson helps, upon which the class will vote. In any class an instruction committee may aid the teacher greatly by drawing maps, making diagrams, copying lists of questions, and carrying to the scholars notifications of assignments. An attendance committee may be formed to visit absent scholars and see that their interest is maintained. An advertising committee would be very useful, to "get up the name" of the class, print invitations and circulate them, print an occasional poster, and insert notices of the class work and plans in the church paper and the town paper, besides an occasional notice of special class meetings read in the Sunday school.

I will complete the suggested constitution, though the remaining articles are self-explanatory:

"*Article IX.— Business meetings.* The class will hold

a business meeting in connection with each monthly social, an annual business meeting in the ——— week of ———, and special business meetings at the call of the president.

"*Article X.— Elections.* The officers and committees shall be elected at the annual business meeting, but vacancies may be filled at any business meeting. New members may be proposed and elected at any meeting of the class.

"*Article XI.— Quorum.* A quorum for the transaction of business shall be one-half of the class membership.

"*Article XII.— Amendments.* This constitution may be amended by a vote of three-fourths of the class membership at any meeting of the class."

The foregoing constitution is adapted to a class of older pupils. It will be helpful if I add some account of an organized class of young boys which I have had the joy of teaching.

This class of seventeen boys was organized at their own request. Young folks are delighted with constitutions and officers and committees and business meetings. Familiarity with these matters has not yet taken the romance out of them. They are discovering the joys of cooperation, and it is the teacher's pleasure to direct them in this new country.

So far as possible, the class organization should be formed by the young people themselves, the teacher putting in a quiet word only where it is necessary. Let it appear to be *their* organization, and not yours, and they will enjoy it far more.

Therefore I did not write a constitution for my class, but asked the class one Sunday to appoint a committee on constitution consisting of three boys.

I did not suggest what three should be appointed, but took those they gave me; and the selection was an excellent one.

We spent a delightful evening in my study writing the constitution, with the accompaniment of a box of candy. We talked over what a constitution ought to contain, and after I had given a hint or two the boys were able to formulate the various articles and sections fairly well. Though the result is not in all points quite as I would have it, yet it is their own, and is most creditable to them.

I will copy this simple constitution, introducing annotations, and thus I can give the best idea of the class organization:

"*Article I.— Name.* This class shall be called The Knights of Honor."

We left the name blank, to be determined later by vote of the class, and this is the name chosen. I sent to a Sunday-school supply house for a dozen different celluloid class pins, costing a cent each. These were passed around and discussed, and the class took the pin and accompanying name that pleased them.

"*Article II.—Object.* The objects of the class are Bible study, to help one another, and to have good times together."

It is well to have the class repeat this article occasionally in concert at the opening of the weekly recitations.

"*Article III.—Members.* The members of the class shall be boys who are nominated by the membership committee and voted in by the class. The teacher may terminate membership for persistent failure in attendance, home study, or attention in the class and in the general exercises of the school."

The reader may guess which sentence thus far came most directly from my pen! But the boys assented to this very heartily, and even would have made it more stringent than I thought wise.

"*Article IV.—Button.* The class button shall be red, with a gold shield bearing a white cross and the letters K. H., in black."

"*Article V.—Teacher.* The teacher shall be appointed by the superintendent. In his absence, substitute teachers shall be obtained by the class officers."

This is an important section. As I have just said, an invitation to teach, coming from a committee of the boys themselves, is very likely to be accepted. I found the boys very enterprising and successful in getting substitute teachers.

"*Article VI.— Officers.* The officers shall be a President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer. The president shall preside at the business meetings of the class, and superintend the work of the committees. He shall take the lead in obtaining substitute teachers. The vice-president shall help the president in every way, and do his work in his absence. The secretary shall keep the records of the class, and take charge of the attendance cards. The treasurer shall take charge of the collection and of all class money."

When you come to elect these officers, it will be well to say a few words about the qualifications that each should have, and then let the boys or girls nominate freely for each, afterward voting by ballot. It is better not to have the ideal selection than to dictate; and at the next election there will be a rearrangement.

"*Article VII.— Committees.— Section* 1.— *Membership Committee.* This committee shall consist of three members, whose duty it shall be to obtain new members for the class."

The size of these committees will depend, of course, upon the size of your class, and some committees, such as the social committee, may well be made larger than others. Give every one an office or a place on some committee. In small classes it may even be well for some pupils to hold two positions.

"*Section* 2.— *Social Committee.* This committee shall consist of three members, whose duty it shall be to plan and carry out class socials at the homes of the members or elsewhere."

I had this committee meet at my house and plan the socials with me. I bought sixteen folding chairs which the boys transported from house to house. We had monthly socials at the time and place most convenient for the parents. I insisted that the "treat" should be simple, and the hour of adjournment early. We began our socials with a formal business meeting, which the boys enjoyed for its practice of parliamentary law. Then, for the rest of the evening — fun!

"*Section* 3.— *Attendance Committee.* This committee shall consist of three members, whose duty it shall be

to take the home-study slips to the absentees, learn the reason for their absence, and report to the teacher."

In a large class there are usually a few absentees. This committee shows them that they are not forgotten, and helps to keep the attendance at high-water mark.

"*Section* 4.— *Room Committee.* This committee shall consist of three members, whose duty it shall be to arrange chairs and hymn-books, open and shut the door and glass partition, take care of the ventilation, and tidy the classroom after the recitation."

I also had the room committee distribute the pencils, paper, home-study slips, and the like.

"*Section* 5.— *Athletic Committee.* This committee shall consist of three members, whose duty it shall be to organize the class for athletic sports, hold contests with other classes, and in other ways promote athletics in the class."

This committee is indispensable in a boys' class!

"*Section* 6.— *Order Committee.* This committee shall consist of the officers, whose duty it shall be to keep order in the class."

It is a first-rate plan to read this section to the class occasionally!

After this constitution was thus formed, I had the class meet in my study one evening, and I read the constitution, article by article, explaining everything and answering questions. It was voted article by article, and then as a whole.

Next we elected officers, and the newly chosen president and secretary were put right to work.

This constitution is very simple. It is better, as I told

the boys, to start out with a simple organization, and elaborate it as we find need. For example, we had no athletic committee in our constitution at first, but the boys promptly inserted one. That was something that I learned about boys.

A classroom helps immensely in carrying on an organized class, but even if you must meet in a large and crowded room, you may gain much privacy by the use of screens and curtains.

Emphasize the class organization at every opportunity. Let the class do their own planning as far as possible. Even a poor plan that the scholars devise is superior to a much better plan imposed upon them by the teacher.

Do things as a class. Go camping together. Visit a museum together, or attend a lecture. Get up a worthwhile entertainment. Take class walks. Help some one, as a class.

Begin slowly. Do not expect full results at the start. Look for growth, but for a gradual growth.

Above all, do not forget, in your zeal for your organized class, Whose organ your class is to be, for Him to make music upon! Only as the Holy Spirit of the living God breathes upon and in your class organization will it be really organic, pulsing with a genuine vitality that will blossom in joy, and bear fruit in loving and enduring service.

XXVII

IF I WERE BEGINNING TO TEACH

It is easy to make mistakes in Sunday-school teaching. That fact proves the greatness of the work. It is only little tasks that one can succeed in immediately. At the start a lawyer is sure to make more and worse mistakes than the section hand of a railroad. Looked at in this light, and remembering the vastness of our Sunday-school work with its enormous issues in time and eternity, the wonder is not that we make many errors, but that we ever make any successes.

And yet the fewer mistakes we make, and the sooner we get out of them, the better; and if the experience of one who has taught in Sunday school for about thirty years can do any good, here it is. I will make a frank confession, so that at least you need not make the same mistakes that I made.

If I had it to do over again, I should think less of myself, and I should think more of my pupils and very much more of Christ. I should not worry about the impression I was making, but I should seek to have Him make an impression upon my pupils, though through my failure. I should not try to shine, but I should try to make Christ's life shine out. I should not seek to be popular, but to make Him so. Probably I should find this the very best way to obtain popularity for myself;

but if I did not obtain it, but did gain my main end, I should not care.

Then, if I could begin again, I should make less elaborate preparation for my teaching. I should learn to simplify my teaching, and to focus it more upon a few facts and truths. As I remember it, I used to put enough into each half hour for two full hours. The result must have been to confuse my pupils and fill them with dismay. I should have remembered that they were at the beginning, or near the beginning, of their Bible study. I should have put myself in their place. I should have insisted upon first things first, and then, after the first things were mastered, and not till then, I should have gone on to the second things. I should have made haste slowly, and I am sure that I should have arrived much sooner at the goal.

If I had it to do over again, I should think less of what I was giving and more of what they were getting. I did little or nothing, at the start, to make my pupils study at home. I gave out no home work. My teaching was all lectures, though usually under the thin disguise of questions and answers. Thus I was all the time pouring into baskets full of holes. Their home study, though probably it would have been very inadequate, yet would have provided a solid cup of attention into which I might have poured something that they would have retained. This was a very bad mistake of mine.

I should have discovered this mistake if I had tested my work, but I did not do this. I did not really "examine" them in any way. Now, I give examinations, written examinations, almost every Sunday; and the proc-

ess, invaluable as it is, takes only five minutes. If I had examined my pupils in those early days, what surprises I should have gained, for them and for me! Every teacher should know, and cause his pupils to know, whether they are actually making progress in Bible knowledge or not; but I used to "teach" straight along in blissful ignorance that I was not really teaching anything — or very little at the most.

When I began to teach I did not make the great mistake of not having a deep personal interest in my pupils, and I think that I had a personal influence over them; but I did not visit them at their homes, or have them visit me at my home, or write to them, or get up little parties for them, or take them to lectures, or go out walking with them, or do anything else of the kind; I just talked to them on Sundays. If I had those pupils now I should do all of those things, and I should get far deeper into their lives, that I might know better just how and where to help them. Once, after teaching a certain young man for several years, thinking all the time that he was a firm believer in Christianity, I discovered to my dismay that he was a very thorough agnostic. I should not make that mistake now.

The reason why I made that mistake was because I did not try to bring my pupils into a definite Christian life. I did not emphasize the necessity of a Christian confession; or, if I did, it was all general emphasis, not brought to a head by definite tests, what the evangelists call "drawing the net." I did not use "decision cards." I did not approach their parents in regard to the matter. I did not have conversations with my pupils, one at a time,

about their joining the church. I do all this now, and count it the crown of my Sunday-school work. At the beginning of every lesson during the studies made through 1910 in the life of Christ I asked my class, "Why are we studying Matthew this year?" And the class answered in concert, "To know Jesus Christ better." That is the use of it all, not the mere gaining of head knowledge. Otherwise I might almost as well be teaching botany.

In fine, if I were again at the beginning of my Sunday-school work, I should try above all else to teach with the great Teacher. I should pray more, rely more on Him, and go with calm confidence before my class. I should be at peace however mischievous the pupils might be, and love them however impudent they might be, because Christ would do this, and He would be in my heart and in my teaching. Oh, it is blessed work, when He is with us. I know that all of you, dear fellow-teachers, are saying in your hearts, "Amen!"

XXVIII

BEARING EACH PUPIL IN MIND

There are two kinds of soldiers. One shuts his eyes and fires away, having the general idea that bullets are good for the atmosphere. The other picks out his enemy, aims for him, and brings him down.

There are two kinds of farmers. Farmer A, being of the opinion that seeds are good for the soil, rams them in — any seeds, any field. Farmer B studies the soil, the seeds, and the seasons, considers what was the last crop borne by the field, and so plants as to get the largest returns.

There are two kinds of physicians. Dr. Smith believes that a " spring tonic " is good for boys and so prescribes it, any boy, any tonic, any spring. Dr. Jones fits the medicine to the sickness.

There are two kinds of cooks. Mrs. Brown holds that " vittles is vittles," and so prepares for her table any food at any time. Mrs. White studies food values, what foods make muscle and what make fat, what foods are easily digested and what are most nutritious; studies also the special needs of the persons for whom she is providing, and considers the season of the year and the time of day; then she fixes upon her menu in the light of all these facts.

Precisely thus there are two kinds of teachers. One kind thinks that all truth is equally good for all pupils. The other kind seeks to fit truths to pupils according to their needs at the particular time.

Now the first set of workers may do good. The random bullet may hit a foe. Some of the careless farmer's seeds will germinate. The spring tonic may in some case be what is needed. Part of Mrs. Brown's provisions may be digested. Some of the hit-or-miss truths may reach the lives of the pupils. But what a waste of time and thought and strength and material! And how incomparably more efficient is the second set of workers!

How can we do this? How can we fit our teaching to each pupil?

In the first place, as soon as we have returned from Sunday school let us review in our minds the experiences of the past hour. What needs of our pupils have been disclosed? What faults have been made manifest? What in our teaching has interested them most? What has seemed to help any one of the class? What would you like to do for Sarah next week? for Tom? for Harry? In this way get the present condition of each pupil clearly in mind. Many teachers fail to make progress in their art because they do not garner the pedagogical hints of each lesson they teach.

It is a help to write all this out very definitely. Rule a sheet of paper in columns, each column headed by a pupil's name, while beneath, Sunday after Sunday, you will make your notes. This Sunday, perhaps, under Tom you will write "impatient"; under Ed, "conceited"; under Will, "not interested"; under Fred, "mischiev-

ous"; under Samuel, "surly." You will also make notes of progress; as, under John, "interested in Lincoln anecdote"; under Benjamin, "asked a good question"; under Theodore, "gave a good account of the Cana miracle."

Then, as soon as possible, take up the study of the next lesson, and ask yourself what there is in it for each of your pupils, to correct their fault or increase their progress. How can you interest Will? Perhaps you will give him a book with a delightful chapter connected with the lesson, which he is to read and report upon to the class. How about Ed's conceit? You may plan some particularly hard questions to ask him. How about Sam's surliness? You may write him a bright and loving letter, asking him to prepare especially on the geography of the lesson, and be responsible for that detail of the work. How about Tom's impatience? You may have him draw a map of the country involved in the lesson, and if you can have him do the work with Sam who is to give the map talk, it will be good for both boys. How about Fred's mischief? You may get him to make notes of the questions that are not well answered during the recitation and ask them again at the close. And how about John? Give him an anecdote to tell, illustrating the lesson. And Benjamin? Ask him to write out a few good questions of his own for you to use in teaching. And Theodore? Assign to him the task of giving an account of the events that come between the last lesson and this.

Somewhat thus you will make use of your teaching experience. You have at least taken special thought for each pupil and devised for each some special work that fits the disclosure of himself that he has just made.

In the course of the next lesson he may make a new disclosure of character, calling for different work; or, he may repeat the same showing and thus indicate the need for more of the same kind of work. In any case the principle I am insisting upon does not change.

Do not teach at blank haphazard. Practise intensive teaching. Put each truth where it will do the most good. Assign each bit of class work to the pupil whom it will help the most. Thus and thus only will you be the workman that does not need to be ashamed, *rightly dividing* the word of truth.

XXIX

BIBLE DRILLS

Most of us can remember the time when there was far more memorizing of the Bible than is now required of our Sunday-school scholars. We are profoundly thankful for the Bible passages drilled into our minds when we were children. They form to this day the substance of our portable Bibles. Most of us believe that more of the Bible should be memorized by our children, and we are perfectly willing that time shall be taken from the regular lesson half-hour in the Sunday school, if necessary, for that purpose.

Some of us, also, remember the time before the advent of the lesson leaf, when the Bible itself, the authentic volume, was far more familiar to the hands of the children than the convenient but misleading slips of paper have allowed it to be since. We should be glad to have the Bible — the whole Book — brought back into the school again; and we are ready, if necessary, to sacrifice some time to accomplish this end also.

To gain these two objects, I wish we might devote a portion of every Sunday-school session, in every class that does not consider itself too big for it, to some such Bible drills as I shall suggest in this chapter. It will be necessary first to drill the teachers themselves in these methods, and that should be done in the teachers' meeting. To

arouse enthusiasm, it may be thought wise to offer some suitable reward to every class or every scholar that comes up to a certain standard in the work.

The time for the drills will vary according to the school arrangements and preferences. Some will like to use them at the opening of the lesson half hour, to wake up the scholars. Some will prefer to get the lesson over, and use in this way whatever time remains. Some teachers will like to utilize in Bible drills the time when the class are waiting for the school to begin; only, not all their class may be present at that time. My own choice of time would be the first five minutes of the lesson half hour.

If this work is entered upon in earnest, it will be a shame for the children to have Bibles that are not worthy to be their permanent friends. Whatever book they use will become familiar to them in every square inch, as no succeeding Bible is likely to become. It should therefore be well bound, it should be well printed, it should have the clearest type, and it should contain the best helps. Show the parents what a degree of intimacy is sought by the exercises, and plead with them to furnish the best copies for their children's use at this important period.

The first drill should aim to make the children perfectly familiar with the sixty-six books of the Bible — a drill in text-finding. You will simply call for a text, say "Nehemiah 3:10," and the first to find it will put up his hand. When most of the hands are up, you will name some one — probably the one whose hand went up first — to read it. In this simple exercise the children will be greatly interested, and will soon become remarkably expert.

Little catches will be introduced, to keep their wits awake. "Jude 2:24," you will call, and you will expect half a dozen laughing voices to remind you that Jude has only one chapter. Other traps will be set, such as "Philemon 2:3," "Exodus 51:3," "Ps. 160:5," "3 Peter 1:6," "Azariah 3:15."

Very soon you will get them so familiar with certain verses that when you call for them they will quote them in concert without stopping to look them up; such verses, for example, as John 3:16; Ps. 90:1; 1 Cor. 13:1; Matt. 5:3.

The reverse of this exercise is useful. The teacher will quote a verse, in whole or in part, and the scholars will find it in the Bible. "The greatest of these is love," the teacher will say. The class will find the verse and read it entire. "And then thou shalt have good success," the teacher will say; and the scholars, with no other hint, will turn to Josh. 1:8 and read the whole verse. This will be like proving a sum in arithmetic, and will show that the scholar has really learned where to find certain texts when they are wanted.

The same method should be applied to longer passages. "Find the parable of the prodigal son," will be the demand; or, "Find the Beatitudes; the seven letters to the churches; the travelers' Psalm; one account of Paul's conversion; the list of heroes of faith; the account of the burning bush."

When the passage is less familiar, an easier form of the exercise should be used, naming the book that is to be explored. "Find, in Ephesians, the list of the Christian's armor. Find in Romans the verse about being

'fervent in spirit.' Find, in John, the account of the resurrection of Lazarus. Find, in Proverbs 11, the saying about 'the liberal soul.'"

Still another useful exercise is based upon a knowledge of the general contents of the books. "To what book," you will ask, "would you go to find out about Caleb? about Solomon? Boaz? Cornelius? Mordecai? In what book will you find the story of Gideon's band? the story of Naboth's vineyard? the account of the temptation? the miracle of the raising of the widow's son at Nain?"

A variation of this test is the following: "Who will be the first to find a verse about Moses? about Joseph? David? Daniel? John the Baptist? Paul?" Or, applied to topics, "Who will be the first to read a verse about obedience? about love? about sin? about Christ?"

It would be a stimulus in this work if an occasional contest should be arranged. A programme of tests would be fixed, each teacher having a copy. On a signal, the classes would be set to work simultaneously, and the class would be the victor that at the expiration of the time had gone the farthest in the programme.

The scholars should be taught to repeat in concert and separately the names of the books of the Bible, together with other Bible facts, such as the number of books, the shortest chapter and verse, the longest, the central, the longest book, Paul's letters, the minor prophets.

The learning of "memory chains" will prove a really fascinating task. These "memory chains" are strings of verses all on the same subject, such as faith, hope, love, obedience, salvation, money. The verses will be arranged

alphabetically, and any mnemonic device may be utilized. These little collections of Bible wisdom will be of the greatest usefulness in Christian work through all the after life of the scholars. The questions that call for the verse-chains will indicate how they are to be used; for instance: "What would you say to one who was in grief? to some one who thought too much about money? to a man who used strong drink?"

Each scholar should be asked to select a chain of verses that begin with the various letters composing his name. These verses should be chosen with extreme care, so as to be those most likely to be helpful in his life. The recitation of them will make a very pretty exercise at some Sunday-school concert.

These Bible drills are not complete till they teach the use of those indispensable aids to the Bible student — the concordance, Bible index, and Bible atlas. The use of the concordance will be taught by giving out a verse, such as "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and setting the scholars to finding it by the use of the concordance (a full concordance, by the way, and not the abbreviated abominations found in the teachers' Bibles). Leave it to the scholars to look it up through the word "fear," or "Lord," or "wisdom," or "beginning." Those that use "beginning" will doubtless find it first, and the scholars will have an example of the advantage of basing their search upon the word that is least common.

The use of the index will be taught by such questions as, "Find and read some Bible verse about the locust." The list of proper names will be used in similar fashion: "Find a reference to the river Pharpar." The atlas will

be used thus: "In what division of Asia Minor is Iconium?" Questions like these, asked briskly and with ingenious variations, will quickly familiarize the pupils with these tools, which many Christians never do learn how to use, and therefore their Bibles remain largely closed to them.

The concert recitation of Bible passages is an attractive exercise. Many fine sections suitable for this purpose will occur to every one — Jas. 3:2–12; Isa. 53 and 55; Ps. 1; Deut. 28:1–14. There is no trouble in finding many selections. The Psalms should be rendered by the class in two divisions, one taking the first half of each stanza, and the other the second. Such Psalms as 136 and 150 are especially effective in that way. Passages in the form of question and answer should be given in the same way, half the class reciting the questions and half the answers. Thus, "Who hath woe?" Dialogue passages should be treated similarly, the descriptive sentences and phrases, however brief, being given by one group, with a separate group for each speaker. Isa. 6 is a fine example of the possibilities of this plan.

An interesting variety of this concert recitation by groups is what may be called concert annotations. One half the class, for instance, will repeat the Lord's Prayer, pausing at the end of each section for the other half to repeat some parallel passage, thus:

Our Father —

Worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Which art in heaven —

The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.

Hallowed be thy name —
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.
Thy kingdom come —
The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

In this way the Twenty-third Psalm may be annotated, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, and many other familiar passages.

Perhaps the most elaborate and interesting Bible drill is the concert recitation with gestures. Take for an example the parable of the sower (Matt. 13: 1–11, 18–23). I heard this once beautifully rendered by a large class of girls, who came marching to the platform, garlanded, and each with a basket hung at her side. They stood at even distances, several rows deep, covering the platform, and they repeated the well-known words in perfect unison, in full volume, and with perfectly timed and natural gestures, somewhat thus:

"Behold (hands stretched out and slightly raised) — a sower (hand sweeping to the basket) — went forth (a step forward) — to sow (scattering imaginary seed gracefully from the basket).—And when he sowed (continued scattering) — some seeds (hands lifted) — fell by the wayside (hands swept downward and sideways) — and the fowls came (hands lifted upward and suddenly swooping downward) — and devoured them up (a grasping movement)."

Many impressive passages may thus be acted out while they are recited in concert. The parable of the prodigal son; the twenty-third Psalm; the stilling of the tempest; the parable of the tares; the parable of the good Samari-

tan; Elijah's struggle on Mount Carmel — these may serve as examples.

Of course in all this work it must be understood — it *will* be understood — that what is sought is heart-knowledge and not merely head-knowledge. But the latter leads to the former, and is its indispensable requisite. Let us store the children's heads with the words of life! We can form no idea of the blessed results as the grand old sentences recur through the years and decades, to warn, to comfort, and to save.

XXX

A COURSE IN CHURCH HISTORY

It has always been a hobby of mine that adult classes in the Sunday school should — study the Bible, of course, for their main work, but also, now and then, study the continuation of the Acts of the Apostles in the wonderful history of the Christian Church.

The average layman — and also every layman, average or far beyond the average — is wofully ignorant regarding the history of his own denomination, not to speak of the history of other denominations. God is in this history, as well as in the Bible history; increasingly so, as men are coming to know Him better and obey Him more faithfully. To be sure, we have no inspired record of it, but that is no reason why we should not study it.

And so I was very glad when the adult class in my Sunday school, having before it for selection a large number of proposed subjects for study, voted to take up one year the study of Church history. It is a very independent class, fortunate in a large membership of thinking folks, and quite capable of getting up its own courses of study. It has been doing this, with entire success, for several years. The class is thoroughly organized, with the usual officers, and with committees for getting new members and planning and carrying out the work of instruction. There is no teacher, but each Sunday sees a

different teacher, except when a short course is taught by one person.

It was decided to take a bird's-eye view of the entire field of Church history, from the close of the Acts to the present time. We knew it would be shockingly sketchy, but we knew also that we could take up any particular period afterwards for more adequate study, if we chose. Bird's-eye views are best, when one enters upon unfamiliar territory.

I am sure that many will be glad to have the exact subdivisions that we used, and I give them here, Sunday by Sunday.

1. Traditions concerning the work and death of the apostles. The destruction of Jerusalem. Persecutions and martyrs.
2. The Apostolic Fathers, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, etc. The Gnostics.
3. Constantine. The Council of Nice. The Arian controversy.
4. The Greek Fathers, Basil, the Gregories, Chrysostom. The Ascetics. Later councils.
5. The Latin Fathers, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine. The Donatist schism, Pelagian controversy and other heresies and controversies. The Apostolic and Athanasian Creeds.
6. The Early Church of England. Bede, Augustine. History of the times.
7. The Crusades.
8. The rise of the papacy.
9. Religious orders.
10. Dawn of the Reformation. Wyclif, Huss.

11. Savonarola.
12. Luther.
13. Zwingli. The Huguenots.
14. The Jesuits and their missions.
15. Calvin.
16. Arminianism. Puritanism. Knox and Presbyterianism.
17. Congregationalism. Robinson and the Pilgrims.
18. Westminster Assembly. Cromwell.
19. Wesley and Methodism.
20. Jonathan Edwards. Later revivals.
21. The Church in the French Revolution.
22. German liberalism.
23. Modern missions.
24. Modern social progress.
25. Modern Romanism.

No one can say that this is not a generous "lay-out," as the boys say,— over-generous, perhaps. But are they not inspiring topics? And are not the possibilities in such a series, for inspiration and solid upbuilding, altogether limitless?

We got out a neatly printed programme, or prospectus, following each subject with a useful list of reference books, choosing those that are most likely to be within reach of every one. Every lesson has a different teacher, and in the list are the names of many eminent scholars. I do not display them here, because that would be needlessly discouraging.

For such a course as this is well within the possibilities of the average school. Every member of the class should own a text-book, such as Sohm's "Outlines of Church

History" (Macmillan, 1895), or Moncrief's "Short History of the Christian Church" (Revell, 1902). In addition, you must place at the disposal of the teachers a collection of the most extended histories and biographies, including a first-class encyclopædia. Having done this, however, any adult class of average ability can carry on a course in Church history with abounding pleasure and profit.

You may have one teacher or many. In either case, you will utilize all the members of the class, assigning to them various subdivisions of each topic, so as to avoid the pitfall of lecturing. Introduce discussions, debates, question-boxes, illustrative poems, bits from historical novels, reproductions of paintings, make full use of maps, charts, diagrams,— in short, bring to bear upon the course the resources of modern pedagogy, and you will not need professors in theological seminaries to conduct it, but just ordinary men and women, who are able to read, to think, and to talk.

Try it, and enjoy a novel Sunday-school sensation.

XXXI

A BUDGET OF HINTS

1. Every Teacher His Own Normal School.

It is better, of course, to attend a Sunday-school normal school or class than to be your own normal school. It is a great inspiration to listen to the vigorous and experienced teacher. You gain new zest from his zeal. You learn as much from his way of teaching as from what he says. You get as many points, perhaps, from the class questions and discussions as from the teacher. Just as a wise farmer visits the agricultural fairs, just as a wise inventor haunts the patent office, so the wise teacher will attend a normal school or a normal class if he can.

But many cannot. They may live in an isolated community. Perhaps they cannot afford the time to go, or the money. Perhaps they have no opportunities of the kind.

But let no one despair. Is your sword short? Then add a step to it. A little more thought and a little more work will put you on a level in this matter with the most favored city teacher.

How? By the faithful use of books and periodicals. They bring nowadays within the easy reach of all teachers the best plans and ideas of the wisest Sunday-school workers. They are available in the greatest variety, of the finest quality, and at the lowest cost.

How may we make such use of them that they will be to us a genuine normal training?

First, read the available books from cover to cover, and the periodicals from first paragraph to last; at least, read enough to make sure of all that applies to your work. Get all these printed helps you can. Borrow from other teachers or exchange with them. Explore every accessible library.

Whatever you can apply to your work, apply. If it cannot be applied fully, then take part of it. If it cannot be used as it is given, then change it so that it can be used. It is your plan, now, to be adapted precisely to your need.

Do not, without careful thought, take it for granted that any suggestion, otherwise valuable, is out of your range. It calls for a blackboard, and you have none? Then substitute a pencil tablet. It requires papier maché models, and you cannot get the material? Then substitute clay or pasteboard, or set the scholars to whittling wood.

Having found a plan you can use, in some shape, then read it over and over. Meditate upon it. Set it down in your note-book as something you intend to try. Make it your own by careful thinking. You must vivify it in this way to take the place of the hearing and discussing in a normal class.

Then, plan for an opportunity to put it into operation, to make trial of the method, to use the principle. One plan a month actually carried out, or one principle really adopted thus and incorporated in one's teaching, is far more than the average attendant upon a normal class

would probably derive from it. And you can easily do that much.

And what you thus get is likely to be more individual and vital than what you would get in any other way. You have had to put more of yourself into it, and so you will get more out of it, for yourself and your scholars and for Christ.

2. Harvested Note-books.

The use of a note-book can hardly be overdone at a convention. It is quite impossible for the most active brain to seize upon and retain all the good thoughts and useful plans that are set forth in any Sunday-school institute or similar gathering. To attend such a meeting and not write down the portions of what is heard that meet your needs is as if a hungry poor man, turned loose in a grocery store, should eat what he could swallow on the spot, but walk off with nothing under his arms or in his pockets.

The mere act of writing is a decided aid to the memory. Much is gained over unassisted listening if you fill your note-book and then never look at it again. As a matter of fact, few note-takers do look at their notes again. They toss them aside for a more convenient season; and then, if that time ever comes, they find that their notes have grown "cold" and unintelligible.

The wise plan is to harvest your crop of convention ideas while it is ripe and before it spoils. As soon as possible go over every note that you have made. Write out each suggestion fully enough to be clear ever afterward. Place each upon a separate slip of paper, and then classify these slips in envelopes suitably inscribed. One

envelope will contain illustrations and thoughts on faith; another, on obedience; another, on the Bible; another, on temperance, and so on. Methods of work may be written in a "plan book," properly indexed — "Review Plans," "Blackboard Work," "Object Talks," "Models," and the like.

Finally, to complete the convention so far as you are concerned, *use* all this material as soon as you can. Tell the anecdote. Put the method into operation. Introduce the fact into some lesson. Not till you have so done is your note-book harvested and the convention made really your own.

3. Their Own Applications.

The applications of the lesson theme to daily life that your scholars will make will be far better — for them — than those that you make. The great problem is to get the scholars to make their own applications for themselves.

If you want to bring about this desirable result, in the first place you must tell the scholars a week in advance just what the central theme of the next lesson is to be; and you must tell it so distinctly and brightly that it will stick in their minds and impress their imagination. Of course, the theme of the lesson will be so expressed by you as to come well within the range of the scholars' interests and experiences; otherwise you could not really teach it to them, and they could not be induced to think independently about it.

This subject being thus placed clearly before them, tell the scholars to watch during the week for happenings that

will illustrate it — events at school or at home, in their work and their play. Tell them that you will expect these illustrations, and will be disappointed if their sharp eyes do not discover some. Then be sure to call for them in the next recitation. Probably you will get only one or two at first, but make so much of what you get that you will receive more.

You may, at the start, send them to their parents for suggestions. This plan will give the parents, if they are wise, a fine chance to point the lesson morals and apply them to their children's lives. They will become your assistants.

You may send the children to the newspapers for lesson applications, if the papers of your town are fit to be read by children. They will be full of points for many lessons, especially for the temperance lessons.

Sometimes the children will find lesson applications in their storybooks. The characters in these tales are so real to the children that what they observe in them will answer the purpose quite as well as what they observe in living persons. Sometimes they will be able to find poems that apply the lesson truths beautifully to life, and copying the poems for reading in the class will be a profitable exercise for them.

Of course the teacher will also be on the watch for applications from all these sources, that he may stimulate his scholars by his own example.

All this work will be greatly promoted by the formation of what you may call " application books," or " daily-life books." These will be blank books, one for each child, in which every scholar will write out the lesson ap-

plications that he himself discovers in any of these ways, and also what he considers best of the applications made by his comrades.

The result of the plan, if it is faithfully carried out, will certainly be that the young folks will become more thoughtful and at the same time more practical. They will learn to make that connection between the Bible and life which is a large — a very large — part of religion.

4. A Study Programme.

The reason why some pupils — most well-intentioned pupils — do not prepare their lessons at home is because they do not know how to go about it. A little practical direction from the teacher will often revolutionize the work of his class.

To this end, it is an admirable plan to prepare a formal programme for home study, writing copies of it on slips of paper, and giving each pupil a copy. You will, of course, go over the programme with the class, and make sure that every member understands just what is called for.

The programme may be something like this:

1. Read the Scripture passage last studied, to refresh your mind about that lesson.

2. Read the Scripture intervening between that lesson and the new one. Carefully note the course of the narrative.

3. Read the Scripture passage to be studied — the entire passage — and not merely what is printed in the lesson helps. Note by question marks in the margin every point that you do not fully understand.

4. Read the notes in your lesson helps, and cross off

the question marks as each difficulty is solved. If any remains unsolved, look in whatever commentaries you have, or other books on the Bible, and try to find a solution of the perplexity.

5. If any places are mentioned in the lesson, find them on the map in your Bible, and read what your Bible dictionary says about them.

6. If unfamiliar persons are mentioned, or strange customs are hinted at, look these up in the Bible dictionary.

7. Read all the cross references that occur in the lesson (using a reference Bible). Note the bearing of each upon the lesson.

8. If your lesson helps contain questions, answer each without referring to any help. Keep this up till you can do it perfectly.

9. Spend some time in getting a clear view of the lesson as a whole. Ask yourself what relation it bears to the main current of the history you are studying or the book of which it is a part. Seek to discover its central teaching.

10. Close with asking yourself what lesson this Scripture has for you personally, and with an earnest prayer that the study may bring forth fruit in your life.

This programme need not be written out so fully as this, but only catch words, such as "1. Last lesson. 2. Intervening passage. 3. New lesson. 4. Notes. 5. Places. 6. Persons and customs. 7. References. 8. Questions. 9. Review. 10. Application." The full meaning, however, should be explained much as I have given it.

Not every teacher will like this precise order, and it is

best that each teacher should form his own programme; but some such study programme as this, earnestly proposed and persistently followed up, will give your scholars so plain guidance for their home study that they will be encouraged to undertake it, and will delight you, before long, with the thoroughness of their preparation.

5. Something to Do.

One of the very best ways of obtaining regularity in your scholars' attendance is by seeing to it that they have some definite work to do when they come. What this work is and how it is assigned determine how effective it will be toward the end in view.

The teacher does not need to plan work for all the scholars, at least for the sake of making them regular attendants, for some may be counted upon to come. They are eliminated from the problem. Usually you will need to assign work to only a few scholars, and to these only long enough to make them habitual attendants. There are other reasons for special assignments of work, however, that may lead you to do it for all your scholars, and all the time.

These special assignments are doubly effective in winning attendance if some honor is attached to them. For example, you may appoint one scholar the Class Geographer. He will be on hand every Sunday, full of importance, for do you not depend on him for map information? Another may be constituted the Class Archæologist, his field being the peculiar customs of the Bible lands, and any other facts about Bible antiquities.

It is a good plan to divide some task between two

scholars, making them jointly responsible for it. They may be set, for example, to constructing a chart of the Hebrew kings, one to make the northern kingdom half, and the other the southern kingdom half, each to explain his portion to the class. Both will be sure to be on hand.

A touch of emulation will aid this method. Several, for instance, may be asked to write a three-minute biography of Samson, all to be read to the class, and the class to vote which is the best. A series of such contests lasting for several months will fix the contestants in the habit of attendance. This plan, of course, will not be tried unless you are quite sure that the scholars will not spoil it by jealousy.

The essential elements of the method are three: a distinct, individual task; the assignment made at least a week in advance; the assignment made publicly, so that the scholar will know that his comrades will expect him to perform the task. Used in this way, with variations in the work to keep it novel, the plan will surely better the attendance of even the most careless scholar in your class.

6. The Method of Bible Study That Has Helped Me Most.

I might call it the "glean-everywhere" method or the "comprehensive method."

When I want to learn all I can about a Bible book or passage, to teach it in the Sunday school or to write about it for Sunday-school workers, I begin by bringing together on a convenient shelf or set of shelves (preferably my revolving bookcase) everything I can find that bears

upon the subject. Books will be there, magazines, papers, clippings, written notes.

There is often a goodly measure of conceit in the advice occasionally given, urging Bible students to discard commentaries and brood over "the Book itself." I will allow no one to exceed my reverence for the Book. It is indeed self-illuminating as is no other book. But not even the Bible can bestow upon me the knowledge of a Farrar, the insight of a Maclaren. When, sitting down with John's Gospel, I open also Farrar's life of Christ and one of Alexander Maclaren's commentaries, I am virtually sitting down with "the Book itself," having provided myself with Farrar's and Maclaren's eyes and brains.

And so I collect most assiduously whatever printed pages throw light upon the Word. Of the standard commentaries, I am especially fond of the Cambridge Bible, the Expositor's, Westcott's, the Speaker's, and the new Century Bible. I use — but with many a protest — the International Critical Commentary. Butler's Bible Work is a good eclectic, and Parker's People's Bible is always stimulating. I buy every book I can find — and afford — on Bible geography, believing that to be one of the greatest aids to an understanding of Scripture. The Bible dictionary — Hastings's and Davis's — is ever at hand. Bible biographies enter, whenever they touch the portion I am studying: the lives of Christ by Farrar, Edersheim, Geikie, Hanna, Beecher, Rhees, Barton, Dawson, "Ian Maclaren," and others; the "Men of the Bible" series, and many more. Then there are Bible monographs, on special books, such as Genung or Peloubet on Job and Mitchell on Amos, or on special themes, such as

Bible prayers, Bible women, Bible mountains. Finally, I have picked up (dirt cheap at second-hand stores, most of them) a fine library of volumes of sermons — Trench, South, Finney, Spurgeon, Chalmers, Payson, Maurice, Robinson, Brooks and others. Indexed, these rescued books furnish me a rich mine of Bible comments.

When, then, I set out to study the Bible, it is more than I that study it. I advance as a phalanx. I have become a theological faculty. Not my poor, blundering mind alone — but I can concentrate upon that particular part of the Bible the brightest and wisest minds that have thought upon it.

How the passage glows with meaning and pulses with power as my eye passes down page after page of illuminating comment! Sometimes I take notes as I read; sometimes I merely mark the margins of my books or underscore the Bible words here and there as reminders; it depends upon the use I am to make of my study. The only point I care to insist upon is the fullness of council I call to my aid.

I am convinced that there is far too little use, even in this day, of Bible-study helps. They cost little; my own library is very full, but it has not been nearly so expensive as cigars would have been. And it has paid for itself many times over.

The reading of books about the Bible leads to the increased reading of the Bible. Indeed, if the books about the Bible are the best books of the kind, they send you to the Bible, they require large blocks of Bible-reading for their fullest enjoyment. The Bible comes close to all men, it is the only universal book; and yet it is the

literary product of an Asiatic people, and of an ancient time. Its customs, history, language, even its modes of thought, require interpretation. Its universality lies in its perfect adaptability to all men after it is translated.

For many reasons, then, I urge young people, who are laying the foundations of their libraries, and all Sunday-school teachers, to buy books that will shed light on the Bible. And if all Christians should specialize in Bible study of this sort, it would be well, though the latest magazine had to go uncut and the latest novel unread.

XXXII

GOOD CHEER FOR DISCOURAGED TEACHERS

It is very easy for a Sunday-school teacher to become discouraged. He has less than an hour in which to offset a thousand evil influences that have been at work on his scholars for a whole week. His task is the making of character, and there is no more difficult task. For this great work he is conscious that he has inadequate ability. He compares his high ideals with his low achievement. He works hard, but wins little appreciation. In short, just as a big wave is followed by a big trough which is a necessary part of a big wave, so a lofty task means a deep discouragement, sometimes and often. The Sunday-school teacher must expect these periods of despondency. In a way, they are certificates of the grandeur of his work, and to expect them is to be partly armed against them.

But there are many other considerations that should be kept in mind. Every teacher should maintain a whole armory of weapons that are efficient against gloom. These weapons he should often polish, and keep them bright and sharp.

One of these weapons in the teacher's armory of good cheer is faith in himself. Let him bear in mind his successes rather than his failures, and frequently review them for his encouragement and stimulus. It is well to make

a list of them. Set down the kind words said about your work. Set down the token that this scholar, at least, loves you. Set down the improvement made by another scholar. Set down any evidence of gain. Label the record, "Lest I forget." Believe that what you have done for one you can do for another, and what you have done once you can do again. Have faith in yourself.

And have faith in your scholars also. Magnify their good points; they are more than you realize. Children are afraid to show their best side, their deepest nature. Minimize their bad points; they are not so bad as they appear; often they are only seeming, and are caused rather by unfortunate circumstances than by inherent depravity. Judge your scholars not by what they are in the class, but by what they are when alone with you, and when they have every chance to show their real characters. Have faith in your scholars.

Most of all, have faith in God. It is His work, this Sunday-school teaching, and not yours. Let Him conduct His work. Be sure that He will, if you will let Him, if you interpose against His power no barrier of conceit or pride or self-will. Yield yourself as His ready, humble instrument, and throw upon Him all responsibility for results.

Of course this means that you will have faith in prayer. You will believe in prayer, not merely as a means of getting your mind in the right condition, but far more as a means of obtaining definite things from God — things that would not come about otherwise. A Sunday-school teacher without a practical belief in the supernatural is sure, sooner or later, to be a miserable failure.

But don't lay down conditions when you pray; don't dictate to the Almighty. Pray for certain results which you know are in harmony with God's will, but not for certain means and methods which may be His way or may not be. Pray that this scholar may surrender to Christ, that another scholar may conquer a bad habit, that a third scholar may become a lover of the Book — all this in any way that God sees best; through your failures and discomfiture, if that is best; but that it may certainly come about.

Convert your very defects into arguments of grace. You are not learned? or eloquent? or beautiful? or winsome? If you were, how easily you might come to rely on those qualities, and then you would surely and sadly fail! But the very lack of these fine things will drive you to lay hold on God, in whom alone is efficiency. If you have them, receive them with joy but with trembling. If you have them not, still rejoice that you have God, who is better and stronger than any power He can bestow upon His creatures.

Practise the patience of God. Live in the long years and not in the short days. In other words, do not be disappointed if you do not get immediate results from your teaching. "Rome was not built in a day," and a child's character is a greater city than Rome ever was. In all your work look far forward and expect the fruitage confidently there.

If the children appear ungrateful and unappreciative, remember that few children wear their hearts on their sleeves. Boys, especially, are young Indians, seeking to

suppress their nobler emotions rather than exhibit them. Remember how little manifestation of gratitude and appreciation there is even in the grown-ups, and be content with a very slight expression of these feelings in young folks. That little undoubtedly means much more that is concealed.

The Bible is a book of good cheer. When you are discouraged, Bible teachers, turn at once to its sunshiny pages. How full they are of words for that very time! — promises of the return of bread cast on the waters, that God's Word shall not return void, that the good seed will bring forth sixty and one hundredfold! Every teacher will do well to make a little collection of these comforting assurances, copy them into a special book, commit them to memory, and repeat them whenever the dark clouds rise above his mental horizon. God's Word is a sun, and it will scatter clouds.

If teaching is hard work for you, if it is not a "natural gift," if you envy the easy successes of "born teachers," there is one thought that should give you cheer: Your very effort under evident difficulties is quite certain in the end to impress your scholars more than the ready triumphs of more brilliant teachers. *They* may be teaching for their own glory or their own pleasure, but it is manifest that this is not true of you. You, very plainly, are impelled only by a sense of duty and by a great desire for the good of your scholars, and the understanding of this will grow upon your class in spite of your frequent seeming failures, and even because of them. This is not to say that failures are to be *sought;* that kind of failure

would bring only scorn. But the failures that come while we are doing our best are often transformed by God's Holy Spirit into the most substantial of successes.

You will need will-power when the discouragements come. Confidence is half the battle. That is why Napoleon went raging through Europe, kingdom after kingdom falling before him: because he had no other thought than that they *would* fall. Learn how to clinch the teeth of your soul. Learn how to say to the devil of discouragement, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" A dogged determination is not grace, but it is a pretty fair substitute for it on a pinch.

If you are discouraged about a scholar, it will usually relieve you to talk with others that have to do with him. Generally you will find that they are having as hard a time as you are, and very likely a harder time. Talk with his parents, his other relatives, his school-teacher, his employer. Such a conversation is quite certain to reinforce your courage and your patience.

Look at your teaching problems on all sides. The scholars are inattentive? But you are sure that they love you. They are mischievous? But the class next them is mischievous, and that spirit is contagious. They are restless? But the schoolroom is wretchedly ventilated. In this way balance one fact against another, and the resultant will not be very depressing. Take wide views; they are always more cheerful than narrow ones.

When you are worried about your Sunday-school teaching, plan and carry out some good time with your scholars. Take a long, woodsy walk with them. Get up a picnic for them. Give them a little party. Take them

with you to visit some interesting museum, or to see and hear a stereopticon lecture. Pleasures enjoyed together will knit your scholars to you. Jolly times together will dissipate the gloom that has come over your teaching.

Or, if you are "blue" about your teaching, try the stimulus of a new plan. Activity is an admirable cure for despondency. Ruts are long depressions, and are always depressing. When you feel downcast, get a substitute some Sunday, and go to another school for fresh ideas. Or, take up some periodical or book that will give you new ways of working. Choose one of them, and put it into operation with all the zeal and vivacity you can muster. Do something different, and, my word for it, you will come into a different and a more cheerful mood.

Often a frank talk with the scholar or the scholars about whom you are troubled will remove your perplexities, or at least greatly lessen them. Go to those scholars with a clear statement of your hope for them and your motive in teaching the class, and show them in what way you find them failing to respond. Then ask for the reasons, that you may work with them to remove whatever hindrances may be in the way of their coöperation with you to those great ends. Put it solely with a view to their own welfare and progress. Leave yourself, your feelings and labors, out of account. In almost every case you will receive a response that will surprise you, and will make plain sailing for you in that quarter for a long time to come.

After all, the best cure for discouragement, that on which you can rely most confidently, is to live for God and not man, His rewards and not the world's, His wisdom

and not your own planning, and the results which He ordains. Let God be your faith and your courage. Just keep moving. Just think of your work and of Him, not of your failures and your feelings. Acquiesce in your discouragement, if you must, but plod ahead. If you work steadily for Him, He will give you courage out of all discouragement; and even if He does not, He will do better than that: He will give you your work, and He will give you Himself.

XXXIII

A PLEASANT SCHOOLROOM

If we want to keep the children at home, we must make home pleasant. If we want to keep the children in the Sunday school, that also must be made pleasant.

On visiting certain Sunday schools, the wonder to me has not been that so few attended, but that any were there at all. Dark rooms, generally basement rooms; musty smells; stiff benches, crowded together; bare walls, adorned with a begrimed map of the Holy Land; a wheezy organ; a threadbare carpet — these are the principal elements of the picture. What a bait for Bible-study!

On the other hand, of course, I have seen many schools that are quite the reverse of all this. They are so charming that one is captured at the first glance, and drawn into their delightful atmosphere. From such schoolrooms the scholars are little likely to stray, even when they reach their most independent teens. Moreover, such rooms are within the reach of all churches, even the poorest, since the elements of their attractiveness are not at all costly or difficult of access. Let me name them, with a few suggestions regarding each.

First in any enumeration of the requirements of a pleasant schoolroom I should place good air. If the air is stuffy, damp, too hot or too cold, the brightest teaching

will contend in vain against the pervasive discomfort. The most intelligent children will be stupid, the best-natured teachers will wax cross, and the headaches carried from the room will go far to erase whatever good is done there.

Basement rooms, where so many of our Sunday schools must be held, especially in the older churches, are very difficult to ventilate. Often the windows could be enlarged, laterally and vertically, and the soil sloped away in front so as to admit much more light and air. When that is impossible, at least the windows may be furnished with strips of wood perforated for ventilation, or, still better, with long panes of glass fastened to the sill and slanting inward, so that the windows may be raised without causing a draught; and these glass ventilators do not obstruct the light.

Whatever else is done, the janitor should air the room thoroughly for hours before the opening of the school. Then, if the air is bad just before the lesson is taken up, open the windows again while the children rise and sing, and give them some oxygen on which the lesson truths may catch fire. A squad of boys (the most restless ones) may be made responsible for conducting this operation. Dub them the Ventilating Brigade.

The dampness of most basement rooms, and of some on the ground level, is to be remedied in part by this vigorous admission of air, and in part by the use of fire. Kerosene stoves are good for this purpose, being portable, inexpensive, tidy, and effective. There are kinds that do not emit a bad odor.

Second only to the matter of pure air, if one would

have a pleasant schoolroom, is the matter of light. To say nothing of the good cheer that sunshine so masterfully imparts, it is needed to purify the air. Then, too, the print of the children's Bibles is usually fine — distressingly and perilously fine — and the type of lesson helps is necessarily condensed. For the sake of the children's eyes, we need all the light we can get.

I have already spoken of the possibility, in a basement room, of cutting down the windows. The glass should be clear, and never the abominations of cheap colored glass that turn into crypts some Sunday-school rooms I wot of. Ribbed glass, however, is good, because it distributes the light evenly through the room. Mirrors placed at the right angle outside will contribute much to brighten the interior. If partitions are used to form classrooms, they should be constructed entirely of ribbed glass.

There is no worthy substitute for God's own sunlight; but if these suggestions are inapplicable, you can, at any rate, turn to artificial lighting — to kerosene, gas, or electricity. Use plenty of it, if you must use it at all. Don't try to economize in children's eyes.

Pictures are another essential for a pleasant Sunday-school room. Nowadays they may be obtained at so little cost, and of so great beauty, that there is really no excuse for not using them freely in our Sunday-school work. Almost all parts of the Bible may be illustrated by charming half-tone prints, many of them reproductions of famous paintings, and the price is from half a cent to two cents each.

These pictures are too small to be seen well at a dis-

tance, though a frieze of them fastened to the wall at the children's height, between narrow strips of wood, is a very attractive feature of at least one schoolroom I know. But for a few cents more, averaging ten cents, one may buy large and exquisite reproductions of great paintings of Scripture scenes, and these are sometimes finely colored. Views of Bible landscapes are also obtainable, and add much to the scholars' sense of the reality of the lessons.

With the exception of the frieze just suggested, I do not think it wise to keep many pictures on the wall at a time. Use few, perhaps no more than one, and change them frequently, as the lessons change. It is an admirable plan to get a few frames with glass fronts and movable backs, in which these pictures may be exhibited, a new one every Sabbath.

When a picture is placed on the wall, a word should be said about it to the school. Tell what it is, and give the name of the artist, adding any other fact that may contribute to the interest.

Fine paintings and engravings that would illustrate the lessons are doubtless to be found in some homes of the congregation. Let it be known that the loan of these for a Sunday at a time would be very acceptable, and doubtless they will be forthcoming. Much more can be done with pictures to add to the pleasantness of the school, and when you once begin the work, new methods will constantly suggest themselves to you.

In addition to pictures, flowers make a delightful adorning for a Sunday-school room. Indeed, plants of all kinds are useful — a palm, or a rubber plant, if you have room

for it in a corner; branches of autumn leaves; a vine trained around a window or carried over the superintendent's stand; and, especially, growing plants in pots.

In obtaining the latter, use the aid of the children. Give them each a bulb to grow at home and bring to the school when it has blossomed. A Bible picture may reward the best blossom obtained. A special exhibition may be made some Sunday of all the bulbs that are in flower, and thus the school may get a little pleasant advertising. At another time packages of flower-seed may be given to the children, that Sunday-school flower-beds may be made all over town and tended by the young folks, with the result of an abundance of cut flowers for the school. Here, too, a happy stimulus may be given by the offer of a reward for the best-kept and most prolific bed.

A flower committee would be a useful Sunday-school adjunct. This committee would oversee all these matters, and in addition would take the cut flowers, after use in the school, to the scholars that are sick, adding to each bouquet a cheery message. The committee will pay especial attention to the schoolroom on anniversaries — Rally Day, Children's Day, and the like — and to it might be entrusted the general decoration of the room.

Do not get into ruts here or anywhere else. A suitable statue may be borrowed now and then and shown for a Sunday. A canary may be brought in — why not? — to brighten up some session. A transparency may be placed in a window. Use in beautifying the schoolroom the same thoughtful ingenuity you show in your homes.

The home air is the ideal we are to keep ahead of us. A shelf of books; a nice case for the library, with glass

doors; vases here and there for the flowers the children will bring; a bright carpet or rugs; a piano and not an organ; maps rolled up in a case, and not stretched out to fill the wall space and gather dust; a flexible blackboard also, rolled up out of the way when it is not in use; chairs, rather than benches, grouped interestingly around little tables with drawers in them — these are items in my picture of a pleasant Sunday-school room.

Of course, if you must use the main auditorium of the church, some of these suggestions are inapplicable. Ingenuity and determination, however, will win many victories even here. It is quite possible to have sockets over the auditorium in which poles may be rapidly set, wires swiftly hooked to the poles, curtains speedily hooked over the wires, and — presto! — you have divided the great, yawning space into twenty or thirty of the cosiest classrooms imaginable. Each class may erect its own tabernacle, and then upon its swaying walls may be hung the map and pictures for the day's lesson. The transformation need occupy only a minute or two.

In all this work of making the Sunday-school room pleasant, get the children's help, as you will obtain their aid with the flowers. They may be interested to collect pictures illustrating the Bible. The older classes may passe-partout the best of the pictures that are contributed. One class each Sunday may contribute an illumination of the Golden Text to hang upon the wall. Other bits of children's work may be exhibited from time to time, such as the maps and diagrams they will make. If the scholars have a hand in adorning the room, its pleasantness will be doubly pleasant to them.

"The beauty of holiness!"— that is a phrase never to be forgotten. Our religion must be attractive, or it is hardly religion. Because of it the office and the home, the city streets and public buildings, our persons and attire, are all to be more beautiful. Certainly, then, the most charming places in any town should be those places where men, women and children gather to learn of the beauty of holiness, and to carry it forth into beautiful lives.

XXXIV

LARGE AFFAIRS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Let us deal with big themes in the Sunday school! Large subjects are not inappropriate to little people. They will teach the scholars to take wide views. They will show them that religion has broad relations and an extensive influence, that it is molding nations, that it is making history, that it is to be counted among the vast world-forces. In every way it will lift the school above pettiness, dignify it, and add to its interest and power, if now and then, at the desk and in the class, the largest possible themes are handled.

Of course, I do not mean that the school should grow unpractical, or cease to deal fully and effectively with the small interests of daily life. That needs not to be said. Let that be taken for granted throughout this chapter.

These larger affairs, the affairs of the church at large and of the great world, as distinguished from the local church and its little world, will not be brought into the school to any considerable extent except as the result of a wise plan persistently followed. I suggest the appointment of one person or of several, whose business shall be this very work. The distinguishing title might be, "The Committee on the Kingdom"; or, if this seems too pretentious, he (or they) might simply be called "reporter" or "reporters." This committee, to maintain freshness of zeal, should be appointed anew once a quarter. It is

not necessary that they should be walking encyclopædias, but merely common folks, who are willing to learn, and able to tell others briefly and interestingly what they have learned.

The business of such a committee would be to keep large interests to the fore in the school — the interests of the denomination, of Christendom, of the wide world. It will be enough if they introduce, at each session, a single point of wide importance; more would confuse. To do this wisely, a schedule should be formed as far in advance as possible, for when you begin the work, you will be surprised to see how many matters press for mention.

Most school sessions are crowded already, and probably not more than two minutes can be assigned for the Committee on the Kingdom (or the "reporters"). Very well; let them make those two minutes shine. Do not spend a second of the time in moralizing, in applying to the lesson the details you are presenting. Let the teachers do that. "This one thing I do," must be the motto of speakers with strictly limited time; and the "one thing" of the Committee on the Kingdom is to get firmly lodged in the heads of the children simply one fact of large scope at each session.

I should begin with a series of lessons about the particular denomination to which the school belongs.

Lesson No. 1: What is its name, and what does that name signify?

2. When did the denomination begin? (At each session the preceding lessons will be reviewed, as far back as possible.)

3. Where did the denomination begin?

4. Under what circumstances?

5. The most important events in the history of the denomination (three will be enough).

6. The three greatest men the denomination has given to the world.

7. The leading principles of the denomination. This topic may well occupy several Sundays, and, indeed, a whole new series may be built up here, taking only one principle a Sunday.

8. The organization of the denomination. Here also we have a topic that will make an extended series of lessons. Take up first the local church, and show its organization — the pastorate, the church officers, the chief points of procedure. Then pass to the church body next larger — presbytery, conference, and the like. Go on to the next body, the synod, state conference, and so forth. Then end with the national and international bodies — General Conference, General Assembly, National Council, etc.

9. Another topic upon which a series of lessons may be based is the boards and societies of the denomination — the various missionary organizations, the national Sunday-school society, the publication department, with its leading publications, the boards of ministerial relief, of church erection, of evangelization, and so on. One Sunday will be given to each of these.

10. Finally, you may make an excursion, as extensive as may be, among the other denominations. These must be presented in groups rather than in detail, there are so many; but certainly the scholars should be given some

idea of the great Christian army of which their denomination is only one division.

In this brief summary I have suggested material for several years. And when the whole has been reviewed, it will be well to begin again and do the same thing for the new set of scholars that has entered.

But this is too much along one line to carry out the full idea with which we started. The denominational series must be broken in upon continually. I have suggested, indeed, ten separate topics, and they may well be treated on ten separate occasions, with longer or shorter intervals coming between. A series like that upon the principles of the denomination should move along with very little interruption, but many of these points, if you are faithful to the reviews, may be taken up without very close adherence to the unbroken order I have indicated.

When the principles of the denomination are taken up, a catechism may be profitably used. Printed or typewritten copies of each question and answer may be given to the scholars, that they may commit them to memory. If a two-minute talk is given to each question a week before it is to be committed to memory with the answer and recited, the memory work will be comparatively easy. The coöperation of the parents will be obtained by a notice from the pulpit, and the teachers will doubtless be glad to lend a hand with a few questions and answers in the classes.

Another matter to which this Committee on the Kingdom should attend is the school missionary offerings. In no way can the scholars be better interested in the large affairs of the church than by giving money to them every

week. The most progressive Sunday schools select a different object for their gifts every month. In choosing these objects, the needs and desires of the denomination are always to be given first consideration, though occasionally it is wise to introduce outside causes.

Whatever the object for the month may be, it is set forth at the beginning of the month with a full explanation, or an explanation as full as time will permit. This may be made by the Committee on the Kingdom, who will, moreover, keep a notice of the object in large letters standing before the school during the month. Brief references should be made to it now and then, with announcements as to how the money is coming in. The teachers should be informed regarding it at the teachers' meeting. And then, after the gift has been made and sent off, whatever acknowledgment comes should be passed on to the school in some bright way, that the scholars may feel how much they are really accomplishing.

The Methodist Sunday schools have a wise plan. Each school is a missionary society, regularly organized under the denominational authorities, and their annual meeting in that capacity is made a memorable occasion. Something analogous to this may be carried out in every school of every denomination.

And especially when the denomination makes an appeal to its Sunday schools for money — as, for example, the American Board of the Congregationalists has several times appealed for ten-cent subscriptions for the missionary steamer, the *Morning Star*,— then a prompt and full response should be made a point of honor.

Still another matter of denominational importance

which the Committee on the Kingdom should have in charge is the arousing of interest in great denominational gatherings — the meetings of the national bodies of the church, and of the missionary societies. Notice should be given of these, their purposes should be explained to the children, prayer should be made for them beforehand, and something interesting should be told about them after they have been held.

All that has been said about the affairs of the denomination and the ways of introducing them to the school applies to the still larger affairs of the Church Universal. Great meetings of the brotherhood of churches should be brought to the attention of our Sunday schools — meetings like the Ecumenical Missionary Conference and the Inter-Church Conference on Federation. In the same way mention should be made of any great event that has a distinct bearing on the life and work of the church at large, such as the Armenian and Boxer massacres, the Congo atrocities, the proclamation of religious liberty in Russia and the similar happenings in South America, the deaths of Miss Willard and Sir George Williams. Nor should the Committee on the Kingdom ignore the striking events of secular history that may have happened during the past week, especially if, as is often the case, something in the current lesson applies directly to the matter.

In short, not to multiply illustrations needlessly, what is desired to put the Sunday school in touch with the great Christian activities of the world, and enlarge in every way the children's idea of the church. Such an endeavor cannot fail to be inspiring. It must quicken

the interest in the study of that Book which lies at the heart of it all, it must increase the scholars' pride in the great name of Christian, and it must help to prepare them for entering upon the adult work of the church with an enthusiastic sense of its importance and possibilities. And any one of these gains would amply repay all it costs.

XXXV

SUCCESSFUL SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIALS

The church holds socials. The young people's society holds socials. Why should the Sunday school indulge in them?

For two reasons: because the Sunday school is a different set of persons, that should be bound together by social ties; and because Sunday-school socials should be conducted in unique ways, having a character all their own, and aiming at distinctive results. How that may be, I shall try to show in this chapter.

How often should Sunday schools hold socials? As often as they can be held successfully without interfering with the other social interests of the church and the home. Often enough, certainly, to unite the school by this pleasant bond, and brighten its atmosphere with the sunshine of good fellowship. Perhaps once a quarter will be the right frequency under average conditions.

Where should Sunday-school socials be held? Ordinarily, in the Sunday-school room or rooms, where there is no vestry or similar appendage to the church. Many schools, however, must meet in the church auditorium, and there exists a well-grounded prejudice against games and other amusements in that sacred place.

Under such circumstances a hall may be rented for the social, or, far better, if the school is small, the social

may be held in a private house. Even if the school is large, home socials may be successfully managed if the school is divided into sections, of congenial ages, a section to a house.

When the weather permits, hold an occasional social outdoors, on some pretty lawn, or in the woods. Many delightful games, impossible for the house, are appropriate for such surroundings.

Who should conduct the Sunday-school socials? Never the superintendent. He has burdens enough without adding this. Perhaps your young people's society will be glad to undertake the work, with its social and Sunday-school committees. If not, appoint a social committee from the school itself, with a chairman who is a genius at planning such affairs, and a general at carrying out his (or *her*) plans.

Make the committee so large that the task will not rest too heavily on any shoulders. Divide the work into as many parts as you have committee members, and make each member responsible for his share of the undertaking. One, for example, will see to the games, or to only one game. Another will advertise the social. A third will see to the refreshments.

The advertising, by the way, is no slight factor in the success of your social (I am a newspaper man). This advertising should be done in many ways — by pulpit and desk notices, by the blackboard indoors and placards outside, by cards of invitation, by the mail, by posters, handbills, the newspapers. Best of all, set people talking about the social.

To that end, get an interesting feature to advertise.

Give the social an alluring and appropriate name. For example, to divulge the first idea that pops into my head, a "potato social," with potato races, contests in potato-paring, a historical and agricultural talk about the potato, a contest in potato-carving, and refreshments consisting of potatoes cooked in all sorts of ways. Some artistic scholar will adorn all notices of this social with drawings of the popular tuber. Half the work is done when you have hit upon some novel idea upon which to base your plans for the evening.

How shall we obtain a large attendance upon the socials? Invite the strangers. Appoint a committee whose sole duty it will be to do this. Give a reward to the class that brings the largest number of strangers, and another reward to the class that has present the largest proportion of its members. Announce these rewards as one of the features of the social. Best of all, get up socials worth attending, and your only problem will be to take care of the crowds.

Among the preparations upon which much thought should be spent is the adornment of the room or rooms in which you will meet. It pays to make pretty and even elaborate decorations. If you have refreshments, use taste in the arrangement of flowers, vines, and tissue paper. Bring in a few rocking-chairs, parlor tables, and good pictures, to give the home air to the place. All this indicates the importance you attach to the occasion, and others also will begin to regard it as something worth while.

It is a matter of considerable importance that you begin promptly. All well-managed socials run by schedule.

There is a carefully-planned programme, with the times for everything carefully estimated, and all written down with exactness. Leave no gaps wherein awkwardness may gather.

Especially, provide some lively amusement at the very start — some interesting occupation into which each newcomer may be drawn as soon as he arrives. If you do not do this, but allow a half hour or an hour of "standing around" before the social really begins, you have made its failure quite certain.

Keep things moving. Pass briskly from one game to another. Make the transition with decision and with leadership, so as to swing the crowd with you. It is the easiest thing in the world for a social to "go to pieces" and become disorganized, if no master hand holds it together.

And then, do not let the social fray out at the end. Fix the time for closing, and let it be known. Provide some especially attractive feature for the close, and let *that* be known. When this last amusement is out of the way, sing some familiar song and let the pastor pronounce the benediction. In this way you will give to the social the air of a finished product.

Many of the plans I shall suggest may add to their attractiveness in the minds of a portion of your company by the giving of prizes or rewards for success in the games. If you approve of such incentives to zealous participation, keep them simple and inexpensive. Whatever is used should be appropriate for the use of a Sunday school, such as some picture of a scene in Palestine, or some Scripture portion. The presentation of these re-

wards by your best speakers will add an interesting element to the social.

Sometimes it will be well to recognize the age divisions in planning for socials. Indeed, it is very difficult to plan an entertainment for children and adults at the same time. Separate socials may be held for the older scholars, the intermediate department, and the primary classes. If you have a home department, that also should have a social once a year, and one purpose of the evening will be to draw into the main school as many of the home department as may be. Occasionally one division of the school may give a social to another division, as the adults to the primary department, or even the primary department to the adults.

So far as possible, utilize current interests in planning these socials. For example, if Washington's birthday is near at hand, let the social be patriotic in its tone, the walls hung with flags and with portraits of national heroes, pasteboard hatchets being given each to wear, Washington's farewell address being read, poems about the Father of his Country being recited, scenes in his life being illustrated by shadow pictures, and patriotic songs being sung. In the same way attach the social to other special times and seasons.

I have said that a Sunday-school social should, whenever possible, be given a character of its own. It should be plainly allied, in some way, to the work of the school, to Bible study. Something peculiarly appropriate to the great aims of the school may be introduced at each social. For instance, at your Washington social you may pass around slips of paper and pencils, requiring each person

to write some Bible quotation that he considers especially fitting the character of our first President. A committee will examine these, and reward in some way the writer of the most appropriate.

There are many Bible games, to be found in any store that deals in games at all. Some evening you might place these on a number of little tables, divide the company into groups, and send each group to a table to play the game that is there. At a signal, they may move to the next tables, and so each group will play all the games in rotation.

"Clumps" may be played with Bible characters or things mentioned in the Bible. The company is divided into two parties, each of which sends a representative from the room. These two agree on something from the Bible, and then return, the one that came from one group going to the other group, there to be quizzed in questions that can be answered solely by yes or no. The side that first discovers the secret announces the fact by hand-clapping, and retains both representatives. Thus the game proceeds, new persons being sent out each time.

Bible anagrams are always good. The social committee has a pile of letter cards. Each person present goes to the committee and whispers the spelling of a Bible proper name. If the spelling is correct, and the name is one that all should know, he is supplied with the letters that spell it. Those letters he then jumbles up, and places them on a sheet of paper, at the head of which he writes his name. Then everybody exchanges anagrams with somebody else, and they puzzle over them until one has solved his anagram. He then scores himself one,

they exchange anagrams back again, and pass on to attempt the anagrams of others. The one that has deciphered the largest number of anagrams by the end of the time assigned is hailed as victor in the contest.

Bible charades might be presented, the various syllables of the name of some Scripture personage, followed by a scene from his life to represent the whole name.

Shadow pictures might be given, setting forth Bible scenes, if you are careful to avoid exaggeration. These might be repeated until they are guessed.

You may profitably base an entire evening's pleasure upon Bible geography. There are many memory tests that will prove to be pleasant diversions. For one, arrange the company in two lines, facing each other. Let the leader of one line give the name of some Bible locality beginning with A. Before the umpire counts ten, the leader of the other side gives another place. So it passes down the lines, each person unable to give a name falling out, until only one is left. Then the lines are formed again for B, and so on through the alphabet, the one with most letters to his credit being adjudged the victor.

Another memory test is the following: Supply each person with an outline map of Palestine, worked off on a duplicator. The leader will dictate a list of prominent cities, rivers, and mountains, which must be located on the maps. Figures will be used; that is, the leader will call out, "Mount Hermon, 21," and all must place "21" on the part of the map where they think Mount Hermon to be.

Geographical enigmas may be given out, and there is a wide range of Bible puzzles based on geography. Essays

on interesting Bible localities may be read. Talks may be given by travelers. Palestine curios may be shown. Photographs and other pictures of Palestine scenes may be exhibited on the wall, on tables, or by the stereopticon. In short, there is scarcely any limit to the ways in which a wide-awake committee may cause Bible geography to furnish an evening's enjoyment.

And Bible geography is only one of a large number of interests that may be laid under contribution. Take the artistic interest, and plan an evening with Bible art. To lighten it up, set the company to molding Bible animals from clay, each piece or "sculpture" to be numbered, and some reward to be given to the person that names the largest number of animals intended to be represented. After the same fashion you may conduct a contest in the drawing of Bible scenes.

For something more substantial, pass around a collection of reproductions of great paintings on Scripture subjects, such as Da Vinci's "Last Supper." Each will bear a number, but the title will be removed. Every one present will be asked to make a list of subjects and (as far as possible) of artists, as the pictures are passed around. Essays and talks on some of the great artists who have pictured Bible scenes, their works and their lives, will complete an enjoyable and profitable evening.

The same idea may be applied to music. Arrange a contest in the recognition of well-known sacred compositions, such as "The Palms," "The Holy City," the "Hallelujah Chorus" from "The Messiah." The opening measure of each will be played; and as it is played, all will write the name of the piece. There will be essays

and talks concerning the great oratorios and their composers, with portions of each sung by a choir. The hymns will not be neglected, and there we enter upon a fascinating field. Songs will be sung by different classes, careful rehearsal having preceded the performance. The Sunday-school hymnals will be brought out in conclusion, and some of the unfamiliar songs therein will be sung by all.

Another social may be built up, at least in part, on the idea of Bible numbers. Take well-known number games, and apply them to the Bible. For instance, you will distribute cards bearing numbers, perhaps from one up to four or five,— one card to a person. The leader will then call out: "The number of books in the Old Testament!" The set of persons that first gets together and presents itself to the leader, their cards summing up thirty-nine, will be decorated with rosettes of tissue paper. The companies will then dissolve, to form new combinations, when new calls are issued, as, "The number of apostles," "The number of days between the resurrection and ascension," "The number of Beatitudes," "The number of chapters in Genesis," "The number of the famous verse in the third chapter of John," "The number of the most famous Psalm," "The number of Jacob's children" (not *sons,* observe!).

I have given only a hint of my thought regarding Sunday-school socials, and the distinctive character that they may be made to assume. To form these plans and carry them out you will need a committee of quick wits and original ability, Bible-lovers, and lovers of the Sunday school. These special designs require time and thought

and painstaking, but they bring rich rewards. If the socials are conducted in the right spirit, they will stimulate love for the Bible and interest in the school, and, best of all, they will arouse new love for our Lord, who came to earth that His joy might be in the hearts of His people.

XXXVI

EASY SUNDAY-SCHOOL CONCERTS

Superintendents, at any rate, will be attracted by my title. How they groan over the expected concert! How often the time for one comes round! How perplexing to plan for one, and how arduous the execution! So difficult has the task become that in many schools the concert has been abandoned in disgust.

But we cannot afford to do this, if the Sunday-school concert is helpful to the school; and I think it may always be made very helpful. I think it may always be so conducted as to attract new scholars, hold the old scholars more firmly, exhibit the Bible knowledge of the school, and teach new Bible facts and truths. Those are the four legitimate purposes of the Sunday-school concert, and I think they may always be attained, and attained without undue toil.

How often should a concert be given? No oftener than it can be given well, though only once a year. In any case, quarterly is often enough. It should never be allowed to become an old story, a drag, or a burden.

But, however often or seldom a concert is given, a concert committee should be at work all the time, a standing committee of the school. As soon as one concert is over they should begin to prepare and plan the next one, and they should bring it out when they are ready. All the

time this committee should be skirmishing for concert ideas, collecting bright recitations, examining publications, drilling the children, stimulating teachers and parents in preparation. It is not right to throw this task on the already over-burdened superintendent. Moreover, it is not business-like, for specialization brings the best results, and no one, however capable, is likely to do a task so well with the fragments of his time as a committee will do it when they focus upon it their united and undistracted resources.

That such a committee would greatly relieve him, every superintendent will instantly agree. By division of labor among themselves, the committee in its turn will make the work easy. Moreover, they will divide the task among the teachers, so that it will not press heavily on any one. Whatever plan for the concert is adopted, it should be portioned out among the classes, so that each class is responsible for the execution of part of it, and each teacher is responsible for his class.

One important factor of a successful concert is pleasurable anticipation. One important duty of the concert committee, therefore, is to advertise the concert as widely and attractively as possible. To this end, distinguish it from other concerts by giving it a name. It may be a Temperance Concert (better, a "Cold Water Concert"), or a Missionary Concert (the "Great Commission Concert"), an Elijah Concert, a David Concert.

Those names will indicate my liking for a variety of motives in our concerts. Why is it that, in monotonous round year after year, we must have a Christmas concert, and an Easter concert, and a Thanksgiving or Harvest

concert? The symbols and thoughts connected with those great days are becoming stale from constant repetition. Concerts based ceaselessly on these three anniversaries are sure to be hackneyed.

Let us try a bold branching out. Let us found one concert on the heroes and heroines of the Bible. Let us devote another to Robert Raikes and the history of the Sunday school. Let us take our church for another theme, and study its history and work. Flowers may furnish the thoughts for another concert, or animals and humane treatment of them, or generous giving, or patriotism.

But you cannot find printed programmes for these themes; while programmes for Christmas concerts, for instance, grow on every tree? True; but how monotonous and uninteresting most of them are, with their endless responsive readings, songs, and recitations! Try home-made programmes, while you are waiting for the publishers to expand their catalogues. You may not yourself be able to strike out a new method, but you can at least take a fresh theme.

Nor is it necessary, in order to give the concert an air of novelty, that everything in it move along new lines. One striking exercise that is original and bright will be enough to make any concert shine. If the concert committee gets two such ideas in any quarter, let it prudently lay one of them away in cold storage!

For example, one concert may be based entirely on pictures related to the quarter's lessons,— stereopticon pictures, if you are fortunate or enterprising enough to have a stereopticon; perhaps the large colored pictures

that may now be obtained for each lesson; perhaps drawings by a local artist. As each picture is shown, one class, assigned to that picture, will in some way tell its story. How this is to be done will be left to the ingenuity and skill of each class, and no one outside the class is to know, until the concert, just what that class is to do.

At another time, the most striking feature of the concert may be a story, original or selected, bearing upon some prominent lesson of the quarter. This will be read by an accomplished elocutionist; better, it will be *told,* and not read.

A very effective concert may be constructed entirely of Bible passages committed to memory and presented in different ways by the classes. These passages will all have some relation to the current lessons. Some of them will be recited by the class in concert. Appropriate gestures may be introduced, and many passages, such as the parables, may thus be given most impressively. The passages that introduce conversation may be arranged as brisk dialogues, and so be presented. Appropriate psalms may be chanted. Two classes may combine to give some lyric passages antiphonally, placing themselves in opposite corners of the room. Consecrated ingenuity will find endless ways of making these great Scriptures bear eloquent witness of themselves.

Thus the Bible will furnish countless themes for concerts. A concert on the miracles, on the parables, on the Beatitudes, on the Ten Commandments, on the Psalms, the Proverbs, the prophets,— what opportunities for varied and instructive exercises do these titles suggest! If your lessons are on the life of Christ, you can always construct

an attractive concert simply by illustrations of that life, taking the events in chronological order. A song (solo, duet or quartette) will make sweet commentary on one scene, the recitation of a great poem will show forth another event, a picture may be exhibited and described, or an object from the Holy Land, to illustrate a third portion of the story. There is room, and inspiration, for all kinds of pleasant treatment.

A question concert at the end of a quarter will afford a practical variation. The preliminary drill must be long and thorough. Throughout the quarter, for each lesson the superintendent will furnish the teachers with a set of questions, perhaps fifteen or twenty to a lesson. Every question should admit of a brief answer that the school can repeat in concert. The teachers will go over these questions with their scholars, not forgetting the reviews, and the superintendent will drill the entire school upon them at the close of the lesson hour. The concert will consist of the brisk asking and answering of these questions, with an occasional appropriate solo or recitation to avoid monotony, and a brief talk on the quarter's Golden Text.

An interesting review concert may be arranged, based on a large home-made map. Only the outline of the country will be placed on the map. The lessons of the quarter will be taken up in turn, and each will be reviewed by a different class. One scholar of the class will pin to the map a large black circle to represent the place which was the scene of the lesson, telling something about the place. Another scholar will carry on to the pin and twist around it a red cord which indicates a journey from

the location of the preceding lesson to this, or simply the progress of events; and as he does this, the scholar will briefly relate the "intervening events" between the two lessons. A third scholar will give the main facts of the lesson. A fourth scholar will tell in a sentence what they teach. Thus each lesson will be reviewed; and if the exercise is kept moving briskly, it will fill the hour with pleasure and profit.

Class drills will give you another enjoyable concert. Each class will supply a single drill, limited in length according to the number of classes. One set of children will exhibit their quickness in finding and reading texts called from all parts of the Bible. Another class will recite Bible passages in concert; another antiphonally. Still other classes will give question drills, the questions of one class relating to Bible geography, illustrated by a map; while the questions of other classes will have to do with Bible animals, miracles, kings, soldiers, mothers, precious stones, flowers, and so on. Of course these drills must be carefully prepared and well practised.

Class exhibits are a pleasant adjunct of a concert. Display around the room whatever will illustrate the work the school has been doing. Now it will be lives of Christ which the scholars have written, or maps they have drawn, or historical charts or other diagrams which they have made, or models which they have constructed. Such an exhibit, announced long in advance, will stimulate the school to better work, and will at the same time furnish a fine recommendation of the school to outsiders.

It is not absolutely necessary to have a talk to the children in order to have a successful Sunday-school concert;

this will be news to some superintendents. Better have none at all than have a poor one. Under no circumstances should there be more than one, though I have been obliged emphatically to decline an invitation to be the *third* speaker at one of these long-suffering concerts. The talk should be illustrated, if possible — a blackboard talk or an object lesson. It should move rapidly, and it should be very clear and simple, with few points, but those scintillating. It is a beautiful art to talk to children — and by no means a common possession. One talk such as it should be will amply make the fortunes of a Sunday-school concert.

The older scholars and the adults should not be neglected in the concert, as is so often the case. Dignify it always by introducing something from the oldest classes. This contribution should never be a sermon addressed to the younger children, but a contribution to the general theme of the concert; and this contribution will be especially valuable when made by young people at the age when they often drop out of the school.

The music is surely an important feature of a Sunday-school "concert," and sometimes superintendents forget the meaning of that word. There should be much singing, and it should be varied, and as good as possible. Solos, duets, quartettes, choruses, violins and perhaps a school orchestra, maybe a school choir — all these may be introduced. Do not use the church choir; and, as far as you can, use the musical ability of your own scholars.

The successful concert must not dawdle; there must be action, energy, swift progress throughout the hour. A printed programme will be an aid to this end, besides serv-

ing as a good advertisement to distribute beforehand. If you cannot print the programme, or even work it off on a hand duplicator, you can at least print it on a blackboard or a large sheet of paper to hang before the audience. Begin on time and close on time. Close promptly, though half the programme remains to be given; carry it over to the next concert.

Pleasant distinction may be given a concert by appropriate decorations for the schoolroom, and these decorations should be as different as possible from those formerly used. Now you may collect all the pictures of Christ you can find; again, all the Madonnas; again, all the pictures of Old Testament heroes and heroines, or scenes illustrating Bible geography. Flags may furnish the decorations for a patriotic concert. Christmas cards may adorn the walls for a Christmas concert. At another time you may use all the objects from Palestine you can gather up. At another time, as already suggested, you may exhibit the maps and similar work of the scholars.

In all this varied work, for and in the concert, let us not forget — and if we proceed along the lines I have indicated we are not likely to forget — the aims of the institution, which I named at the outset. Every Sunday-school concert should seek to attract new scholars and hold the old scholars more firmly. It should exhibit in some degree the Bible knowledge of the school, while at the same time it teaches something new about the Bible. A concert that does these four things, though inadequately, is well worth while.

XXXVII

PULLING TOGETHER

I have always been much impressed by the following fact: Take two vessels full of water; connect them. Let the first have a surface area of one square inch and the second of one square yard — or a square mile, for that matter. Put a plunger in the small vessel and press down on the water with the weight of a pound; instantly one pound's pressure will be exerted on every inch of the surface of the larger vessel.

This fact illustrates the value of *esprit de corps* in a Sunday school. When that fine quality is present, when the school "pulls together," then the force of each is communicated to all, and the force of all upholds each. The school has become an effective unit.

When the school lacks this *esprit de corps,* how it drags! It may boast of notable individual features; here and there a teacher is arousing enthusiasm, here and there an officer may do admirable work. But they are all at cross purposes. Methods do not fit together, purposes do not pull together, there is no coöperation. Therefore, as a school, there is no operation.

Enthusiasm for individual teachers will never take the place of enthusiasm for the school. When those teachers leave, their scholars leave. Such a school has no self-perpetuating power. It is not an organism, it is a con-

geries. It is not a block of sandstone, it is a heap of sand grains.

School spirit is analogous to the spirit that animates a living body. If an arm is on this table, a leg on that, the heart in a dish here and the brain in a bottle yonder, we know what has happened: the body is dead, and has got into the medical college! Life is conditioned upon juxtaposition of parts, the same life-blood flowing through all, the same nervous system directing all. Life is conditioned upon "pulling together."

If this is true — and it is all absolutely true — then this pulling together is one of the essentials of a live Sunday school. Indeed, it is the first essential. It may cost time and pains to attain it; but attain it we must, at whatever cost, or we are not sure of having a Sunday school at all very long. Suggestions of some of the practical ways of attaining it will occupy the remainder of this chapter.

In the first place, a teachers' meeting unifies a school, makes it pull together. This powerful unifying agency is usually despaired of because of the erroneous impression that a teachers' meeting requires a teacher. It does not; only teachers that meet. If you meet to study the Sunday-school lesson and methods of teaching it, you will need an executive head to assign topics, as, that a certain teacher will discuss the intervening events, another the points of time, others the geographical points, matters of word interpretation, doctrinal points, questions of custom, methods of teaching, illustrations and applications, while the most skillful of all will close the evening with a quiz. This Teacher's Coöperative Club, as it might be called,

is easily organized and most profitable in its results. And it will cause the teachers to pull together.

In the second place, regular and thorough-going executive-committee meetings unify a school. Some superintendents like to be the whole set of officers. Before long such a superintendent has a chance to be the whole school also. In the executive-committee meeting the wiser superintendent has a chance to arouse perhaps ten persons to harmonious and vigorous action for the school, and these are the persons whom the school has placed over its affairs — the pastor, the assistant superintendents, secretary, treasurer, librarian, chorister, and heads of the primary department and home department; perhaps others. If the chief interests of the school are planned for in such a cabinet meeting, the school can hardly fail to pull together more effectively.

Any planning for the school on the part of companies interested in it helps to unify it. For instance, the church prayer meeting. Once a year is not too often to devote a church prayer meeting to the Sunday school. Let the superintendent be the leader, and let live topics be discussed, with much prayer.

A strong personality unifies the school. Get for your superintendent, if possible, the brainiest, liveliest, lovablest man in the church. Keep him in the position for life, if you can, just as you would keep a noble pastor for life. Do you know how a concretion is formed in a rock? Simply by the presence of a nucleus of hard substance upon which like material may be deposited, year after year, by the percolating waters. A long-tenure superintendent of the right sort is such a nucleus, and around

him forms, layer by layer, a Sunday school that is an entity.

A graded system is a powerful unifier of a school. It implies the orderly progress of the scholars from class to class, from department to department. That implies that both teachers and scholars are bound together in a harmonious, well-designed effort. All parts of the school must pull together, if the scholar is to be carried from point to point of Biblical knowledge in a swift and steady advance.

A school enterprise unifies the school. Do something for the church: get new cushions for the pews, or new hymnals; or set the scholars to cleaning the churchyard and caring for flower-beds there. Do something for missions: let the school, for instance, undertake to educate an India famine orphan. Do something for the Sunday school itself: get it a new set of maps, or a stereopticon. Do something for the village: organize a lecture and entertainment course and set the scholars to selling tickets. In the course of such a joint undertaking the school will certainly learn to pull together.

Recognition of membership in the school unifies it. A school button or badge to be worn on all important occasions, a list of the scholars' names kept posted somewhere and perhaps printed once a year in a neat pamphlet, a little gift on Christmas to each member of the school — such recognition costs little, and pays for itself many times over in the perception of a common tie, in the willingness of the school to pull together.

Advertising unifies the school. "Get up its name," as the billboard men say. Put it often in the papers.

Talk about it in the pulpit. Announce its new features on placards posted about town. Send printed invitations through the mail. Distribute in the homes wall-calendars upon which the name of the Sunday school is conspicuous. Keep the school in the public eye. Make it an institution. Soon you will find folks proud to belong to it, and this common pride in it will cause them to pull together.

A general review of the school unifies it, as a regiment is unified by a dress parade or an army by a series of maneuvers. This is one of the chief values of the quarterly concert. All parts of the school should be represented in the concert, all departments, all ages, all classes. And as the school thus passes in review, a school-consciousness will be formed, a sense of school-personality.

Similarly, concert exercises in the weekly sessions unify a school. These concert exercises may well be far more numerous and far more varied than is usual. Singing, under a good leader; long Bible passages committed to memory and briskly recited in unison; the finding of references by all; the reciting of a catechism in concert — some such exercises should be a part of every school session, and this union of minds and voices will train the school to unity of feeling and action.

A good time unifies — any jollity which the school enjoys together. The teachers and older scholars attend a Sunday-school convention in a body. The school holds a lawn social. There is a school walking trip to some scene of special interest, or a moonlight ride or a steamboat excursion. The school treats itself to an exhibition of moving pictures. It visits some museum under expert

guidance. It holds an annual athletic field day. It goes on a picnic. Laughing together, playing together, enjoying together, will cause them to work together, to pull together.

Competition with other schools unifies a school, just as an army is firmly knit together, if ever, in the presence of the enemy. These competitions may be arranged along various lines — athletic contests, oratorical contests, contests in answering questions about the Bible carried on like a spelling-match, contests in reciting Bible verses, contests in the writing of essays on Scriptural themes. All of these, with wise judges and appealing rewards, will do much to solidify the participating schools, and some of them may be made to do much toward increasing the knowledge of the Bible.

Praise unifies. It is like the sunshine, fusing hearts into one enthusiasm. The pastor and the superintendent can best praise the school publicly — the attendance, the deportment, the singing, the collection, any feature of the school life. If all the school has a part of the praise, all the school will be sure to strive more earnestly toward the excellence that has been commended. Any team will pull together well if full measures of oats are at the end of the pull.

Motion unifies. A regiment on the march to the music of a gallant band will move as a single man. Keep the school in brisk motion, if you would have it pull together. Set goals courageously before it, and give the order, "Forward, march!" Let the band play, let the colors fly, be enthusiastic, wave your arms and shout!

Persistence unifies. It is like the steady pressure of

superimposed strata that consolidates broken coral scraps into marble, and loose sand into sandstone. Form a purpose, and adhere to it. Don't be scrappy in your plans, or you will have an incoherent school. Fix on your goal, and then press toward that mark. The school will pull together along the road of your steady determination.

Finally, and by far the most important of all these considerations, the Holy Spirit unifies. It is He, the *Saint Esprit,* that most effectively promotes *esprit de corps.* As He enters all hearts, they are bound together by a new and living organism. It is He in whom the whole body, the school, fitly bound together, is compacted and whole. As He draws us to the cross, we are drawn closer to one another, we clasp hands in a fresh and vital brotherhood, service is glorified and the Bible exalted, and the splendid, pulsing love of Christ comes to answer in the Sunday school that prayer of Christ, "that they all may be one."

XXXVIII

A FRESH START

The observance of Rally Sunday in the Sunday school is grounded upon well-known laws of body and mind. Human organisms are so constituted that they cannot perpetually be at their best. Physical powers relax and the mind flags. It is impossible to maintain indefinitely at the highest pitch any thought or feeling or action. Even loyalty, and even loyalty to the noblest things, such as the Bible and the Bible school, has its ebb and flow. Even Elijah, even John the Baptist, even Peter, perhaps the three most zealous men of all the Bible, went far down in the valley of spiritual depression, and required their rally days. It is not at all strange that the immature scholars in our Sunday schools need such a day.

The world is full of analogies. It is only in heaven that the trees bear their fruit every month. In this lower sphere the productive autumn is followed by the rest of winter and the exuberant Rally Day of spring. Not even so stolid a substance as steel can escape the law, but every razor must have its regular holiday, or its edge will not retain its sharpness. The universe is like a vast violin, whose strings cannot be perpetually stretched at concert pitch, but must be let down while the instrument is not in use or they will grow flabby and unmusical.

A Sunday school may have been running all summer,

and still need a Rally Day, perhaps need it all the more. During the hot weather, energies have been relaxed, attendance has fallen off, and the contagion of playtime has seized upon the spirit of the school. Summer, in even the most active and best maintained Sunday schools, is a sort of fallow season, after which a Rally Day is required to break up the ground, for the sowing of good seed. If this is not done, and done vigorously with sharp plow and harrow, it will be seen that many a bad seed has found lodgment.

Rally Day is well named. The name is soldierly. It suggests a great Leader, and a great cause. It suggests a standard up to which we are to come. It suggests comradeship in action. It suggests new vigor in work. The name is spirited; it has life in it.

If Rally Day is rightly managed, it will be like the brisk setting forward of troops. They will start off smartly, and all together. The band will be playing and the flags will be flying. Elbows will touch and heads will be held high. If soldiers advanced one at a time, there would be no charges and no battles.

It's the first step that counts. Well begun is half done. A good beginning makes a good ending. The proverbs of all nations recognize the value of a vigorous start, of a rally to new tasks.

What is more pleasing to the fancy than a clean page on which to write, fresh garments to put on, a new house ready for occupancy? New ways — if I may venture a bull — are better than the old, even though they are no better, just because they are new. In the realm of the imagination, where children and properly built elders live,

new bottles renew the wine and new patches re-create the garment. Give a girl a fresh ribbon and all the world is freshened for her. Rally Sunday is to deck our schools with fresh ribbons.

Our Sunday-school rally has much in common with a political rally. Why do the great parties appoint their committees, get their speakers, plaster the bill-boards with flaming posters, load the mails with circulars, "hire a hall," decorate it lavishly, get out the brass bands and the torches? Not so much to make votes, because votes are seldom made in that way, but rather to advertise the party, and to stimulate the party workers.

In like fashion our Sunday-school rally must be so contrived as to fire the imagination of teachers and scholars, grip their wills, kindle their zeal, and focus all their energies upon the task before them. It is the one great chance of the church year. If it fails, the failure will extend over months. If it succeeds, the success will last for many weeks to come.

It is our great chance to advertise the school. The special features that will be planned for Rally Day, the speeches, the recitations, the songs, the dialogues, the object talks, the blackboard talks, will be fully set forth in notices in the town paper and from the pulpit and on postal cards and circulars and even on posters for the bulletin-boards and the village trees. Every school may well have an advertising committee the whole year around, and Rally Day will furnish its grand opportunity.

It is our great chance to promote the attendance of the school. Promotions will be made. The nucleus of several new classes will be formed, which must be filled up in

each case. This is a good time for a canvass of the whole town for new scholars, rewards being offered for every new scholar brought in on Rally Day.

It is our great chance to get out of ruts. Let the superintendent call a meeting of all the officers and teachers, and make a new start with them as well as with the scholars. Determine to do things differently, in many important particulars. If the Scripture reading has been by alternating verses, superintendent and the school, have the boys read alternately with the girls, or let one class read alternately with another class, or let some scholar commit the passage to memory and recite it. If it has always been the superintendent that has led in prayer, have several teachers do it, or one of the older scholars now and then.

Determine upon some large new plan for the school, and at least announce it, if you cannot inaugurate it, upon Rally Day. You may decide to purchase a school stereopticon, or to get new books for the library, or to form a school choir or a school orchestra, or to set up screens around the classes, or to obtain a set of wall maps, or to establish a reference library for the teachers and older scholars, or to build a room for the adult class, or to form a Sunday-school kindergarten, or to adopt the plan of organized classes. Whatever it is, you will make much of the new undertaking, using it fully to add to the Rally Day enthusiasm.

And finally, in all your Rally Day planning, be sure that the right standard is raised around which to rally. That standard is the banner of the cross. Let loyalty to Jesus Christ be the rallying cry, and not a bigger class or a

bigger school or to beat other scholars and other schools. If with this aim we rally our forces, the peerless Captain will take command, and will lead them to a year of victory.

XXXIX

THE COÖPERATIVE TEACHERS' MEETING

Probably all Sunday-school workers will admit that the greatest need of our schools, a need least often met, is the need of teachers' meetings. Private study of the lesson is not enough for our teachers. They need instruction in the methods of teaching. They need the inspiration of fellowship and the helpfulness of consultation. They need to hear one another's prayers. They need to learn one another's experiences. Each needs, no matter how wise he is, the wisdom of all the others brought to bear on the lesson. The school business needs such a meeting of its principal workers. The school needs the *esprit de corps* that such a gathering can best bring about. Nothing is a greater help to a school than a teachers' meeting, and yet no agency of progress is so commonly lacking. Why is this?

Because of the difficulty of finding leaders, and because of the tradition of one-man responsibility for the teachers' meeting. The teachers are already overburdened, and in few cases can one be found willing, or, in his judgment, able to carry on this meeting of teachers, doing practically all the work. It means a lecture course, lasting fifty-two weeks in every year.

Now if your school has found such a heaven-born leader, a man who has the time and the consecration and the

brains for this hard but delightful task, thank God and elect him to the post in perpetuity. But if, as is likely, no such man or woman is in sight, then shed no tears, but establish forthwith a coöperative teachers' meeting. A teachers' meeting of the sort I shall describe is possible everywhere and under all circumstances. It is most successful with large numbers, as they give an increase of aggregate wisdom and the inspiration of size; the conditions are ideal when neighboring schools unite in the enterprise; but if only two or three teachers can come together for the meeting according to this plan, that will be ever so much better than solitary study.

The motto of the coöperative teachers' meeting may well be, "Everybody is wiser than anybody." Everything is to be done in coöperation. No one is to do more than his share, and each is to do his share. Some definite part of the work is to be assigned to each, and he will be pledged to do it — or try to!

Elect a manager of the organization, who will be a good executive. Elect a new one every month, till you have given all a chance to show what is in them; then the terms of service should be longer, but never long enough to be burdensome, or cause it to degenerate into a one-man affair. The manager's sole duty is to plan work for others and get them to do it. He is to preside at the meetings, and say as little as possible!

The work of the teachers' meetings is to be thoroughly and even minutely divided up, giving each a part. It will be helpful to assign names to these officers, somewhat as follows:

A reviewer, who will not only question the teachers on

the last lesson, but, what is more important, will illustrate ways of going over the last lesson in the classes on the coming Sunday.

A surveyor, who will present a general outline of the new lesson in a few sentences.

A chronologist, who will bring out the time of the lesson and illustrate it in every way he can, as by a chart, by ribbons marked off, by a list of events going on at the same time in other lands than Palestine.

A geographer, who will make the scene of the lesson as vivid as possible, using maps and books, engraved pictures and photographs, and showing how to use these most effectively in the class.

An antiquarian, who will discuss the strange customs that may be brought up by the lesson, illustrating them from books of travel or the accounts of such living travelers as may be accessible.

A historian, who will put the lesson in its proper setting, especially bringing out clearly the events intervening between the last lesson and the new one.

A philologist, whose duty it will be to explain all words and phrases in the text that call for explanation.

An exegete, who will unfold the meaning of the passage, bring to bear the best thoughts of the best commentators.

A gunner, who will suggest the practical applications to the lives of the scholars.

A librarian, to introduce literary references, such as poems based upon the Bible passage, and mentions of it in great books. He may also have charge of a reference library helpful in the lessons.

An artist, to describe the paintings and sculptures that

have the passage for a subject, showing pictures if they can be obtained.

A story-teller, to give anecdotes and other illustrations that will be useful in the class.

A reporter, to scan the newspapers for current events illustrating the lesson.

A hand-worker, to suggest things the children can be set to doing to illustrate the lesson, such as Bible-marking, map-drawing, modeling, picture-coloring.

A questioner, to conduct a "quiz" at the end of the hour, and especially to suggest to the teachers some thought-arousing questions for their classes.

A pedagogue, to propose novel methods of teaching that are applicable to the lesson under discussion.

Of course I do not mean that all sixteen of these officers must be appointed in order to make a success of this plan, or that all must report at every meeting; some lessons give no opportunity for some of them. I am only illustrating the possible scope of the work. You may want to drop some of these and add others. The essential thing is to divide up the work, and do it thoroughly.

These officers may be appointed by the manager, or the teachers may draw lots for the places. Three months is long enough to continue any arrangement, and then should come a general change. If you have few teachers, let each hold several offices.

There should be a regular programme. Begin with a song, appropriate to the lesson (and some teacher assigned to point it out). Then a prayer, by one of the teachers. Then the Scripture passage will be read in some novel way that may be useful in teaching the lesson. The con-

versation portions will be read as dialogues. The speeches will be read as continuous addresses. Different versions will be used. Here is a chance for another officer, the *Bible-reader*. Then will follow the reports of the various officers, perhaps in the order in which I have named them. It will be the business of the manager to hold each speaker down to a definite small portion of time assigned him, and keep the meeting running briskly. The teachers are bright enough not to need full discussions of everything; hints are sufficient for them, in most cases. Close with a few minutes devoted to the general business of the school, conducted by the superintendent, and with an earnest prayer for the work of the coming Sabbath.

The advantage of this form of the teachers' meeting over the one-man meeting of tradition is that each is more loyal to it because of his own responsibility for it, the co-operation of the many gives it really more interest and value, and the plan is carried out with continually increasing ease. Try it, if you have no teachers' meetings, and you will find the coöperative teachers' meeting to be the life of the school.

THE END

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