

YOUNG ATHEISTS.

A suggestive scene took place lately in a railway car that was crossing the Rocky Mountains. A quiet business man, who with the other passengers had been silently watching the vast range of snow-clad peaks, by him seen for the first time, said to his companion,

"No man, it seems to me, could look at that scene without feeling himself brought near to his Creator."

A dapper lad of eighteen, who had been chiefly occupied in caressing his mustache, pertly interrupted, "If you are sure there is a Creator."

"You are an atheist?" said the stranger, turning to the lad.

"I am an agnostic," raising his voice. "I am investigating the subject. I take nothing for granted. I am waiting to be convinced. I see the mountains, I smell the rose, I hear the wind; therefore, I believe that mountains, rose and wind exist. But I cannot see, smell, or hear God. Therefore?"

A grizzled old cattle-raiser opposite glanced over his spectacles at the boy. "Did you ever try to smell with your eyes?" he said, quietly.

"No."

"Or to hear with your tongue, or to taste with your ears?"

"Certainly not."

"Then why do you try to apprehend God with faculties which are only meant for material things?"

"With what should I apprehend him?" said the youth, with a conceited giggle.

"With your intellect and soul!" but— "I beg your pardon;" here he paused; "some men haven't breadth and depth enough of intellect and soul to do this. That is probably the reason that you are an agnostic."

The laugh in the car effectually stopped the display of any more atheism that day.

But this is a question that cannot be laughed or joked away. The immature lads are not few in our colleges who find a Greek grammar too much for their brains to master, yet who loudly proclaim themselves agnostics or materialists, and challenge the Creator of the universe to stand on trial for their verdict. Ridiculous as they are, there is with many of them a sincere, eager hope under their petty conceit and boasting.

Every thinking man in his youth must face for himself that terrible problem of life: "What is God?" and "What is he to me?" Sometimes the wild dissipation, the mad outbreak, which wrings a mother's heart, is but the desperate attempt to thrust this question out of sight. As the young man decides that question his future life takes shape. Let us hope that no matter how vain or irrational such a questioner may be, in his very questioning, the mind may be elevated and enlightened by its approach to that invisible good behind the earth, and behind life, and death, and evil, whom we call God.

It is for us to help him come nearer.—Selected.

GRADED SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

HORACE HITCHCOCK.

From the inception of the Sunday-school to a comparatively recent date, the prevailing idea has been that it was a school for the instruction of children in religious things and the methods employed have largely confirmed that impression. The result of such a system and sentiment has been, that Sunday-schools have been principally under fifteen years of age, those that were older feeling that they had passed the limit of time in which they were to receive instruction in the school.

Now, what is the reason? We believe it to be the fault of the methods used, and not of the scholars. In every school there may be found four classes of pupils—1st, the little ones from four to eight years of age; 2nd, those who are from eight to eleven, who are able to read and make some preparation of the lesson themselves; 3d, the boys and girls from eleven to sixteen, who do not want to be classed as and with little children, but do not deny their usefulness; 4th, members of the school sixteen years of age and over—all of whom feel that they are no longer children, but men and women. The average Sunday-school sends its "infants" out of the main room, but all the other classes are massed in one body, in about this order. A class of small boys,

then a class of young ladies, then two classes of boys or girls, then a class of young men. But they are mingled without system. The superintendent and chorister, and visitors address "the children," some of whom are perhaps their seniors, and all the way through the service there is little or no recognition of any difference in age or mental condition. Near the close "The Orator" drops in and assures "the children" that he is more than happy to see their bright eyes and smiling faces. The young men have great interest in the pattern of the carpet, while the young ladies either blush to be thus classed, or become indignant at such treatment. Both inwardly resolve that they will no longer endure such humiliation, and leave the school when the first opportunity presents itself. Who can blame them? If our young people who have passed through and mastered the primary studies in the public schools, were retained in the primary department and classes, they would certainly be removed by their parents to some school where they could receive instruction adapted to their age and requirements, and rightfully. Why should all the members of the Sunday-school receive the same instruction, more than in the public school? The injunction is, "Milk for babes and meat for men."

A century of effort has demonstrated that all classes of scholars cannot be adapted to the Sunday-school as usually conducted. Why not then adapt the school to the scholars, giving to each class of pupils such mental and spiritual food as they need? "If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must come to the mountain."—E. A.

NOT GOOD MANAGEMENT.

When a superintendent reproves a teacher openly before his scholars, or does anything to lessen his respect in their eyes.

When he spends his time promulgating the school, to the neglect of other duties, and to the distraction of the attention of both teacher and scholars.

When he lingers in too close proximity to some young teachers in the act of teaching, giving them the uncomfortable impression that he is doing it to hear how they teach.

When he insists upon the scholars behaving in a reverential manner during the opening services, and forgets to do so himself.

When he carelessly rushes into classes, and interrupts teaching to ask some trivial question.

When he uses threats, or makes promises which he knows he will fail to carry out.

When he presses some one to become a teacher who has no qualification whatever for the work.

When he invites a teacher or friend to give an address, assuring him that "anything will do," and yet knows him to be a thorough bore.

When he expects little children to act like grown men and women.

When he shouts himself hoarse, and rings the bell half a score times to get what he calls "order."—W. Biana.

PRIMARY TEACHERS.

1. Endeavor to prepare the children's minds to receive the particular instruction you are wishing to give, by finding something in their own experience in analogy with it; and thus proceed from something they know to something they do not know.

2. In your lesson always endeavor to make one point prominent, and let your whole instruction bear upon it, like rays leading to a common centre.

3. At the conclusion of each lesson, gather up the crumbs; that is, collect and arrange whatever has been brought forward, and let the children repeat, according to the elliptical plan of teaching, the substance of the lesson in order that what they have received and been exercised upon may be fixed in their memory.

4. Draw from the children, by proper questions, the fact or precept you may wish to bring out, and then imprint it on their memories by simultaneous repetition.

5. Before you give a lesson, consider by what series of questions you can lead the children to the point on which you wish to engage their attention. It is very easy to tell a fact. Some teachers will simply narrate it; others, by the elliptical plan, will suggest the ideas to the children and

allow them first to supply the word; others, again, make it obvious by suggestions and acting. Neither of these plans accomplishes the object of cultivating habits of thought and attention. Consider always that you have given a bad lesson if you have told the children much and they have told you little.

6. Avoid questions that can be answered by yes and no, and do not suggest to the children the answers they ought to give; as, for example, by stating two things, one of which is the answer to the question.

7. Keep the children but a short time at any mental exercise, and as soon as it is over relax their minds by some physical recreation.

8. Do not allow the children to speak in a loud tone, as it excites the mind and wears the body. Give whispering lessons, and lessons in a low tone occasionally, that they may feel their power to regulate their own voices.

9. When children get dull and inanimate raise your voice, and repeat your words faster.

10. Avail yourself of the effect of sympathy upon the children, and they may be governed almost entirely by it.—Christian Teacher.

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRANT LESSONS.

(From Peloubet's Select Notes.)

Aug. 31.—Psalms 19: 1-14.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. We see God's character in nature as we see a landscape by moonlight. We see God revealed in His Word as the same landscape revealed in the light of the rising sun.

II. Nature, without revelation, is like a great cathedral with divinely-pictured windows seen from without. Nature, with revelation, is like the same cathedral seen from within.

III. When Christians oppose science, they remind us of the strange battle fought in Sept., 1523, on the Scottish border. The English troops of Henry VIII., under Lord Dacre, were awakened suddenly in the night by the call to arms, for the enemy was upon them. "The darkness was great, but not so great but that they made out the dim forms of the mighty cavalry host charging down upon them."

"They can see the host at last, Coming terrible and vast."

So an English cheer arises wild and shrill, As they form and face the onset with a will."

History tells us that one hundred sheaves of arrows were shot away in this strange combat. A strange combat indeed, for instead of being the Scottish cavalry as they supposed, it proved to be their own horses who had broken loose into their camp, and mad with terror, charged their masters." So the results of scientific investigation sometimes seem to charge upon the Christian hosts. They should be met with bridle and harness, not with weapons, and they will aid in the conquest of the world to righteousness and Christ.

IV. Who can understand his errors? (ver. 12.) Many books have a few lines of errata at the end, but our errata might well be as large as the volume if we could but have sense enough to see them. Augustine wrote in his older days a series of Retractions; ours might make a library if we had enough grace to be convinced of our mistakes and to confess them.

PRACTICAL.

1. Vers. 1-6. The wisest of men are those who, with pious eagerness, trace the goings forth of Jehovah as well in creation as in grace; only the foolish have any fears lest the honest study of one should injure our faith in the other.—Sparrow.

2. The power, wisdom, goodness punctuality, faithfulness, greatness, and glory of God, are very visible in the heavens.

3. But we cannot be sure of God's goodness and love till they are revealed to us in His Word, and especially by Jesus Christ, the Living Word.

4. So much is revealed in nature that we have no excuse for not loving and worshipping God.

5. Vers. 12-14. David's prayer. (1) The prayer shows his humility; (2) his affection; (3) a consciousness of duty; (4) a regard to self-interest.—William Bay.

6. The Christian desires to be as pure within as without, to be as free from secret sin as from open sin, for it is the sin, not its publicity, that he hates.

POISONED MINDS AND SOULS.

In Eastern Pennsylvania Harry B., a boy of fifteen, was tormenting his younger brother, when his father interfered and threatened to punish him. Harry drew a pistol; in the scuffle that ensued his father was shot in the breast. The boy's mind was crazed by reading dime novels.

In Philadelphia a teacher in one of the public schools ordered a disorderly pupil to go to the head of the department for reprimand. The boy gave a peculiar call and eight boys immediately closed around her, and each of them presented a pistol loaded and cocked at her head. "It is thus that 'the sons of the forest deal with the white slave,'" they shouted. Not one of the boys was over twelve years of age. They were all arrested. The boys' desks were full of the low set class of novels and plays.

In New York a little girl of twelve and a boy of fourteen cloyed together. They were found a month later in a house in Pennsylvania and brought home. They were the children of respectable parents. Their ideas of life were gained from cheap sensational literature.

Two boys aged eleven and eight ran away from New Jersey City and made their way to Philadelphia, when they were overtaken. Their baggage consisted of one blanket, two guns, one butcher-knife, a razor, a dozen cartridges and forty-five cents in money. They said that they were on their way to the prairies, and that they intended to become highwaymen and rob railway trains. They had been reading the life of the James brothers.

A gang of boys, the sons of honest mechanics and workmen, combined together in Cincinnati under the name of The White Tigers. They met in a cellar, which they called "the den," twice a week, where they ate sausage with mustard and drank a glass of whiskey. Each Tiger was required to bring to the den two dollars' worth of stolen articles, or proof that he had drawn blood in a fight.

These boys were all under twelve; they had frequented the lower class of theatres, and had read the exploits of the ruffians in the West.

All of these facts were collected from different journals during a single week. We commend them to the attention of parents, who can draw their own meaning from them. We only ask, "Do you know what your own boys are reading?"—Youth's Companion.

Question Corner.—No. 16.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

- 1. From what place did David bring the ark to Jerusalem?
2. How did it come to be in that place?
3. What man in the New Testament had his ear cut off and by whom was he healed?
4. By whom, and on what occasion was it said, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect?"

SCRIPTURE PROVERBS.

- Take a word from each of these passages and form a citation from Proverbs.
In God we boast all the day long, and praise Thy name for ever. (Psa. xlv. 8.)
Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God. (Isa. xlii 10.)
Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand; for the Son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. (Psalm lxxx. 17.)
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. (Prov. i. 7.)
Say not unto thy neighbor, Go and come again, to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. (Prov. iii. 28.)

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 15.

SCRIPTURE SCENE.—David bringing the ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. 2 Sam. 6. 1, 15.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

GOD BE MERCIFUL.

- 1. G-ourd . . . . . Jonah iv. 6-9.
2. O-badiah . . . . . Obad. 1. 1.
3. B-alaam . . . . . Num. xxi. 12-30.
4. E-egg . . . . . Luke xi. 28.
5. M-ary-Magdalene . . . . . Luke viii. 2.
6. E-bud . . . . . Judges iii. 26-30.
7. E-est . . . . . Psa. xxxvii. 7.
8. R-ome . . . . . Rev. xxii. 17.
9. I-srael . . . . . Gen. xxxii. 28.
10. F-ire . . . . . Dan. iii. 25.
11. U-riah . . . . . 2 Sam. xi. 27.
12. L-ion . . . . . 1 Kings xiii. 24.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Correct answers have been received from Maggie Maud Miller.