

question and a good one may often be a mere matter of length. "Why did the Christians at Antioch keep the inferior leaders for work in the city, but send away the most prominent men in their church to labor as missionaries?" That is abominable; it should be, "Why did the Antioch Christians send away their best men?"

A good question will contain as much as possible of the personal element. "What do you understand by the phrase 'remission of sins'?" is much better than "What is the significance of the phrase 'remission of sins'?" Because the personal question puts the expected answer in a more modest light, the answer will be more unconstrained and full.

And, by the way, there are few forms of questions more zealously to be avoided than the form I have just used, "What do you understand by—?" It is the unfailing resource of the poor questioner. A verse will be read, a phrase quoted, a doctrine or a principle named, and then will follow, as the night the day, the tiresome old formula, "What do you understand by this, Miss A——?" One would be quite safe in declaring, at any particular instant during common Sunday-school hours, that one-fourth of the Sunday-school teachers of the world were repeating, with united breath, that Methuselah of a query, "What do you understand by this?"

Again, a good question must be swift. It must come so quickly that there will be no time to get out of the way. Some questions that, if written out, would not be bad, are prolonged in the utterance of over-deliberate teachers like foggy illustrations of the law of perspective. Good questions leap. You feel their buoyancy as you read or hear them. It is like the huntsman springing into the saddle and shouting, "Come on!" No one with an atom of thoughtfulness is dull to the exhilaration of spirited questions. They have inspired all the wise thinking of the world.

And, finally, good questions should be absolutely clear. There is one thing in the world that must always be faultlessly perspicuous and distinct, and that is a marching order in time of battle. Now, questions are the marching orders of our scholars' brain-regiments, in a battle of infinite moment. Let them ring clearly as ever bugle-call was sounded. Questions mumbled, hesitant, caught up and

patched over, confused and slovenly;—what wonder if these get slow and mumbled answers? A question clearly put, not only proves that the questioner has clear ideas, but it wonderfully clarifies the ideas of the answerer.

Good questions, then, are thought-compelling, varied, short, personal, piquant, unhackneyed, brisk and clear. Do I ask too much? Nothing that all may not acquire, if but a tithe of the zeal and labor claimed by the trivialities of a few years are spent upon these issues of eternity. Let every teacher consider what characteristics of a good questioner he may add to his pedagogical outfit.

INSPIRING QUESTIONS.

I use this title advisedly, because I believe that it requires more genuine inspiration to lead the average scholar to ask questions than to perform any other part of the teacher's difficult task. How easy to ask our own questions, to put in our own answers in order to draw them out again, were that all of it! But to transform the passive into the active, the auditor into the investigator, the questioned into the questioner, that is the goal of the true teacher's endeavor.

Shall we count a recitation successful when the teacher has been earnest and zealous in his inquisition, the scholars ready and full in their responses? A single question, borne, it may be, on a voice so timid that it is scarcely audible in the buzzing room, yet sprung from some young heart just moved with the sudden desire of truth, is worth all the rest.

If the teacher wishes to carry his scholars beyond the parasite stage, which is just as dangerous intellectually as physically, both to the parasite and its supporter, he must learn first that this weaning comes not without thoughtfulness and design. He must learn that, even more carefully than he plans the questions he is to ask his scholars, he must plan to inspire them to ask questions themselves. He will be most successful if, from the many matters which could be brought up in the lesson, he selects two or three of prime importance, and schemes to elicit the questioning enthusiasm of his class along those few lines. But how to do it?

In the first place, the teacher must be a questioner himself. An old hen can hardly