

THE OLD MAGAZINE PROBLEM.

BY MATE PALMER.

What do you do with your old magazines and papers? Stack them away in the attic if you are so fortunate as to possess one, or if you live in a flat have you three or four shelves entirely around the store-room filled to the ceiling, and some more tucked away in the basement? They are the hoarded accumulation of your years of housekeeping, the dread of house-cleaning season, and, if perchance you are one of those migratory individuals who live in a rented home, the terror of moving time, when they must all be carefully packed, dusted, and a new place set apart for them. Of course you value them. Why don't you have a grand clearing out and get rid of them? Some you kept because there was an article you especially liked. To save your life you could not even tell what it was about now. Others you preserved because you did not have time to look at them at all when they came. No, and you never will. In the multiplicity of new magazines you won't go back to the old ones. In the meantime there is a constant demand for something to read in the various charitable and reformatory institutions. What you might easily contribute would, perchance, help to cheer sad hearts and lighten many gloomy hours. Then there are many of your acquaintances who are not flooded with reading matter. Sort your magazines over, you know which will suit or be suitable for certain persons, and when you give them, stipulate that after perusal they shall be passed along to some other hungry mind. Thus only will your shelves assume a less overworked appearance, and the magazines and papers complete the mission for which they were created.

While you are about it, you might go through the numerous bundles and packages you have laid away so carefully from time to time, until every bag, chest and spare nook fairly groans with the accumulation. You have no idea what you will unearth; big rolls of calico, like gowns long since forgotten; give them to some old woman who still finds an avenue for her industry in the ever gorgeous patchwork quilt. Scraps of silk and velvet in abundance; gladden some young girl's heart with them, whose deft fingers will fashion them into something pretty and useful. And there are a lot of worsteds and some canvas left since the time you used to embroider impossible woollen dogs on pink backgrounds. You will be surprised to find how many really useful things are there, too; articles you have had to buy again and again, because you had forgotten you had them. Now you can utilize them, and the things you don't want, give away.—*Union Signal*.

A GOOD QUESTION.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

If I were asked to name the chief fault of the average teacher, I should say, "Asking questions that can be answered by 'Yes' and 'No.'" Among my acquaintances was once a teacher in a secular school whose method of questioning was invariably this. He would have before him the statements of the text-book, copied out with painstaking care, and would develop the subject thus: "Is it true or is it not true, Mr. A—, that"—and here would follow the statement or definition of the text-book. The ambiguous answer, "Yes," was amply satisfactory. Unfortunately, when such teachers gain a foothold in the Sunday-school, they are not so easily dismissed as from secular establishments.

Now, a good question merely furnishes the starting point, and pushes the scholar out along the course toward some goal of truth; but in a question that can be answered by "Yes" or "No" the teacher himself ambles amiably up the track, and condescendingly allows the scholar's monosyllable to pat him on the head after he himself has reached the goal. A question that can be answered by "Yes" or "No" merely formulates the truth as it exists in the teacher's mind, and invites the scholar's assent to it; a good question, on the contrary, provokes the scholar to formulate truth for himself.

Now, it is much easier to express what we see to be true than to get any one else to express original thought. There is also, to the unwise, more glory in laying down

principles to which others must agree than in getting others to lay down principles to which we must agree. It will always be true, therefore, that the lazy and the pompous will have no aim beyond educing monosyllabic answers. Most teachers, however, are earnestly desirous of the best, but do not know how to frame wise questions. What must be said to them?

First, that they must not go to school before their scholars. Expert questioning is not learned in the class-room, but in the study. A lead-pencil is the best teacher: A sheet of paper is the best drill-ground. Let the Sunday-school worker who aspires to the high praise of a good questioner sit down persistently, after studying the lesson, and write out a set of questions. Nay; on each point, so far as he has time, let him write several questions, criticize them, fancy what kind of answer each will be likely to elicit from the scholar, and choose what appears the best question. Try it on the class, and learn valuable lessons from the result.

This method, laborious as it is, must be kept up until skilful questioning has become instinctive. That there may be hope of this happy result, by the way, the written questions must never be used in the class,—only the memory of them, and the drill the preparation has given. It surely will happen, soon or later, that the careful student of practical pedagogics will be able to get along without writing, merely formulating fit questions in his mind as he studies the lesson. After a time he may dispense even with this, and look simply after the points to be presented; trusting to extemporaneous question-making.

Not wholly, however. The best questioner in the world gets into ruts. The best forms of questions ever invented are worse than the worst if they are used with dull reiteration. No one can devote careful attention to the form of his questions without falling in love with some particular way of questioning; and this will not always be the best way, but will probably be the most original way. A form of question that is irreproachable the first time will be unendurable used six times in succession. It is necessary, then, even for the trained questioner, to revert now and then to his old lead-pencil-drill, in order to study variety.

But how may the uninitiated know a good question when they see it, or make it? As said already, it must not be such that a lazy monosyllable may answer it. As said already, too, if one is in doubt, he has but to try it on the class, and note results. But further. A good question will be likely to have something piquant about it, if the subject admits. For instance, "James was killed, Peter was freed; why was that?" is better than saying, "How do you account for the fact that while the apostle James was beheaded, the apostle Peter was delivered from the hands of his persecutors?"

Furthermore, the difference between a poor 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 ques-

tions 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 them 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 wondrously 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.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON VII.—AUGUST 13, 1893.

PAUL AT JERUSALEM.—Acts 21: 27-39.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 30, 31.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."—Phil. 1: 29.

HOME READINGS.

M. Acts 21: 1-14.—Paul Going to Jerusalem.
T. Acts 21: 15-26.—Paul at Jerusalem.
W. Acts 21: 27-39.—Paul Assailed.
Th. John 19: 1-16.—Christ also Suffered.
F. 1 Peter 3: 8-17.—Suffering for Righteousness' Sake.
S. Phil. 1: 19-30.—Suffering for Christ.
S. Psalm 46: 1-11.—God a Help in Trouble.

LESSON PLAN.

I. Seized by the Jews. vs. 27-30.
II. Rescued by the Soldiers. vs. 31-36.
III. Permitted to Speak. vs. 37-39.
TIME.—May A. D. 58; Nero emperor of Rome; Felix governor of Judea, but now at Caesarea; Claudius Lysias Roman commander at Jerusalem.
PLACE.—Jerusalem, the temple area.

OPENING WORDS.

The particulars of Paul's journey from Miletus to Jerusalem are given in Acts 21: 1-16. On his arrival he was cordially received by the brethren. To remove the prejudices of the Jews, who believed that he forbade the observance of the Mosaic law, it was thought best that he should show himself in the temple with four disciples, the expenses of whose Nazarite vow he should undertake to defray.

HELPS IN STUDYING.

27. The seven days—which would complete the observance of the vow. Of Asia—proconsular Asia. They had probably seen Paul at Ephesus. 28. Help—to bring this offender to punishment. The people—the Jews. The law—of Moses. This place—the temple. Polluted—by bringing Gentiles, as they asserted, into the inner court, where none but Jews were allowed to enter. 29. Trophimus—a Gentile of that city. Supposed—but falsely. 30. Drew him out of the temple—they meant to kill him, but would not pollute the temple with his blood. 31. Tidings—official report. Chief captain—Claudius Lysias, the commander of the fortress Antonia, adjoining the temple. Acts 23: 26. 32. The castle—literally, 'the barracks,' the part of the tower occupied by the soldiers. 36. Away with him—so they cried against his Master. Luke 23: 18. 38. That Egyptian—alluding to some well-known evildoer. 39. Tarsus—the capital of Cilicia, in the south-eastern part of Asia Minor, north of the Mediterranean sea.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Give an account of Paul's journey from Miletus to Jerusalem. (Acts 21: 1-16.) How was he received at Jerusalem? What report did he make? What counsel did he receive? What did he do? (Acts 21: 17-27.) Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. SEIZED BY THE JEWS. vs. 27-30.—What seven days are here meant? Who found Paul in the temple? What false accusation did they bring against him? Why did they thus accuse him? What followed this accusation? Why were the temple doors shut?

II. RESCUED BY THE SOLDIERS. vs. 31-36.—What did the mob mean to do? How were they prevented? Who was the chief captain? What did Lysias do? What did he inquire? What did the mob answer? What did Lysias then command? What new nobility was raised? When was it heard before? Luke 23: 18; John 19: 15.

III. PERMITTED TO SPEAK. vs. 37-39.—What request did Paul make? For whom had Lysias mistaken him? What did Paul say of himself? What further request did he make? What followed this request? What should a Christian be always ready to do? 1 Peter 3: 15.

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. The enemies of the truth are ready to believe evil of a good man.
2. We should not judge from outward appearances.
3. We should not act on partial information.
4. We should not allow anger and hatred to enter our heart.
5. We should defend ourselves when falsely accused.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. Who stirred up the people against Paul? Ans. The Jews from Asia.
2. What accusation did they bring against him? Ans. They accused him of speaking against the law, and of defiling the temple by bringing Gentiles into it?
3. By whom was he attacked? Ans. The Jews dragged him from the temple, and were about to kill him.
4. How was he rescued? Ans. The chief captain came with soldiers, and took him from them and bound him.
5. What followed his rescue? Ans. The chief captain gave him permission to speak to the people.

LESSON VIII.—AUGUST 20, 1893.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX.—Acts 24: 10-25.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 14-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."—1 Cor. 16: 13.

HOME READINGS.

M. Acts 23: 1-30.—Paul's Defence.
T. Acts 23: 1-11.—Paul before the Council.
W. Acts 23: 12-35.—Paul sent to Felix.
Th. Acts 24: 1-27.—Paul before Felix.
F. Rom. 10: 1-13.—Righteousness.
S. Titus 2: 1-15.—Temperance.
S. Matt. 25: 31-46.—Judgment to Come.

LESSON PLAN.

I. The Charges Denied. vs. 10-13.
II. The Faith Confessed. vs. 14-21.
III. The Matters Deferred. vs. 22-25.
TIME.—May, A. D. 58, seven days after the last lesson; Nero emperor of Rome; Felix governor of Judea; Agrippa king of Trachonitis, etc.
PLACE.—Caesarea, the residence of the Roman governor of Judea, forty-seven miles north-west of Jerusalem.

OPENING WORDS.

The intervening history given in chapters 22 and 23 should be carefully studied as the introduction to this lesson. Paul was sent as a prisoner to Caesarea, the residence of Felix, the Roman governor. Five days after his arrival his accusers came from Jerusalem. Paul was charged with three crimes—viz.: 1. With sedition; 2. With being a ringleader of the sect of Nazarenes; 3. With an attempt to profane the temple at Jerusalem. To each of these charges Paul gives a specific reply.

HELPS IN STUDYING.

10. Governor—Claudius Felix, a freedman of the emperor Claudius. 11. But twelve days—what opportunity had there been in so short a time for him to raise a sedition? To worship—he gives three reasons for his visit: 1. To keep the feast; 2. To bring alms; 3. To make offerings. 12. Disputing—raising a tumult; a flat denial of the first charge. 14. But this I confess—Paul now answers the second charge. Heresy—Revised Version, 'a sect,' the same term as used in their charge (v. 5). The law and the prophets—the Old Testament Scriptures. In becoming a Christian he had not apostatized from the faith of his fathers. 17. He now refutes the third charge. Alms—the gifts of the churches. Offerings—the ritual sacrifices in the temple. 21. Except it be—this one saying was all that the council had any personal knowledge of, and it had caused a division in the council itself. 24. Drusilla—daughter of Herod Agrippa, and sister of Agrippa II., who appears in the next lesson. 25. Trembled—in view of his sins and their coming punishment. Go thy way—he dismissed the subject for the present, but promised attention to it in the future. But the convenient season never came.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Who was Felix? Who accused Paul before Felix? What charges were brought against him? Title of this lesson? Golden Text? Lesson Plan? Time? Place? Memory verses?

I. THE CHARGES DENIED. vs. 10-13.—How did Paul begin his defence? What general denial did he make of the charges against him? vs. 13? What was the first charge? What was Paul's reply and proof?

II. THE FAITH CONFESSED. vs. 14-21.—What was the second charge? What confession of faith did Paul make? What did he say of his hope? What further did he declare of himself? What was the third charge? What was Paul's reply? What did these facts show? Who had first made this charge? What did Paul say of them? Why did he refer to his conduct before the council? Of what one voice did Paul speak? What is the substance of Paul's defence?

III. THE MATTERS DEFERRED. vs. 22-25.—What did Felix do after hearing Paul's defence? Why did he defer his decision? Under what guard did he put Paul? Who were present at the second hearing? Of what did Paul reason? Why did Felix tremble? What did he say to Paul? What would have been a better decision?

PRACTICAL LESSONS LEARNED.

1. Truth may sometimes be regarded as heresy.
2. We should so live as to have a conscience void of offence.
3. Innocence will give a man boldness in the presence of his accusers.
4. Guilt will make a man a coward—a judge to tremble before his prisoners.
5. It is very great folly to put off what is an immediate duty.

REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. With what three crimes was Paul charged? Ans. Sedition, heresy and profaning the temple.
2. How did he reply to the first? Ans. He denied it, and called upon his accusers to prove it.
3. How did he answer the second? Ans. He confessed himself a Christian, but declared his belief in the Jewish law and prophets.
4. What did he say of the third charge? Ans. He declared that instead of profaning the temple, he was in it as a worshipper.
5. On what subjects did he reason before Felix? Ans. Righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.
6. What effect had his reasoning on Felix? Ans. He was alarmed, but did not change his life.