

The second aim which the teacher and class should have clearly in mind,—especially the teacher—is an understanding of the connection between the different parts of the lesson to be studied. The verse divisions with which we are all so familiar are not logical divisions, that is, they do not correspond to the paragraphs of ordinary prose; hence to take up a lesson verse by verse as some teachers do, is to hinder, rather than to further, a real grasp of its meaning. For purposes of teaching, verse divisions should largely be ignored, though they furnish a highly useful means of locating individual passages.

Within recent years a great deal of use has been made in the teaching of literature of what is called the "problem" method. A selection of considerable length is worked over solely with the purpose of finding an answer to a single important question. For example, Was Hamlet insane? Is Shylock a tragic or a comic character? Is Brutus, rather than Cæsar, the real hero of the play of Julius Cæsar? are questions which compel a good deal of reading as well as a good deal of thought.

This method is, of course, chiefly of use with advanced pupils, but it has a place even with junior classes. In the study of a lesson on Peter's denial of Christ, the question: What made Peter deny his Master? will involve a careful study of the whole story. If the Good Samaritan of the parable of that name had been, instead, the good Jew, would that have made any difference in the effect of the parable? is a question which demands an examination not only of the parable itself but also of its context.

More important still than the connection of the lesson with its context and the connection of the various parts of the lesson with

each other, is the connection between the lesson and the daily life of the pupil. This last should be after all our greatest aim.

"Every Sunday School lesson should lead to Christ" is doubtless a true statement, but true as it is it does not necessarily imply that

every lesson should contain a distinct reference to the person of Christ or even to his teaching. As with the disciples on the walk to Emmaus, the influence of Christ may be present without a formal or even a conscious recognition of the source from which that influence proceeds.

The teacher, in the fulfilment of his teaching function, may tell a story, paint a picture, enforce a moral, expound a truth; rarely does he feel called upon to preach a sermon. The connection between the lesson and the life of the pupil is often most effectively made when it is not pushed to the point of labored demonstration. There are, of course, special occasions when special appeals can be made with propriety and with effect, but these appeals, being special, are not a part of the weekly or even of the monthly routine of the class.

In connection with the foregoing, we should never forget that the real application of the lesson is not made by the teacher; it is made by the pupil himself. When we have helped him

to do this effectively we have reached our goal. For one Sermon on the Mount, we have in the Gospels scores of instances of way-side teaching, in which the elements of instruction is emphasized and the elements of exhortation subordinated, and the experience of the centuries has nothing to offer by way of improvement upon Christ's method of shaping human lives.

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FOUR TASKS

One of the most important tasks confronting the church to-day is the taking of proper steps to secure an adequate force of Sunday School teachers. This will require at least four things:

1. The selection for this service of men and women who are so filled with the spirit of the Master that they are willing to undertake any task which love for him and for those for whom he died demands.

2. Convincing those thus selected that there is no other direction in which they may invest their lives so effectively as in the moral and religious training of the young.

3. Making them see that this is a work the successful doing of which requires intelligent preparation.

4. Rendering it possible for them to acquire such preparation.

Until the church does all this, the Sunday School will never be able to accomplish in a really successful way the great task to which it is called.—E. B. Chappell