

"Sing, please," said he, pressing nearer Quince with his book.

It was a hymn his mother used to sing; he had sung it with Esther and with Rachel. Hugh Mercer could sing; he was always strong and self-reliant; it was encouraging to look at him.

Quince joined in the singing. Merry looked his satisfaction. Then his head was bowed; the minister was saying "Our Father."

The speaker was a young man with a rare earnestness of manner and an individual magnetism that drew all hearts to him. He did not talk into the air, but his words went out like shafts of truth, hitting the listener in a sure place. It was easy to follow his thought, and quite impossible to forget what he had said. His closing remarks made an impression upon Quince that he was impelled to recall many times before he slept.

Leaving over the pulpit with an earnestness that compelled attention he said:

"The beginning of doubt is the time of danger. Beware of it young man! The history of our age is full of admonition. Years ago, at your mother's knee, you read the story of the infant Jesus cradled in the manger; you believed it to be as true as it was beautiful. It was true then, and it is true to-day. Have you any doubt about it?"

"Looking at the wrecks of men who once stood as shining lights in the world. They began to doubt the inspiration of the sacred writers; they argued that they were men like others, subject to prejudice and liable to make mistakes. They measured every statement by their own intellectual standard, and they stumbled before miracles. Such things were against reason, and of course could not be, they said. Poor struggling soul! Like a ship at sea, tossed by the winds and at last driven upon the rocks, the doubter has no safeguard. Only cherish a doubt with reverence to the truthfulness of the Bible, and then the history of Jesus becomes a kind of myth; then there is no atonement, no resurrection, no future life; and thus the soul, like the ship, sinks amid the breakers of daring scepticism and goes down into the black vortex of despair. Lost! lost! lost! A soul lost through unbelief! Could anything be more dreadful?"

Quince questioned as he felt his hand clasped by Mr. Dibell at the close of the service, if the latter really knew of his doubtings, and if he was led to say this because he knew. It was the first time a minister had come down from the pulpit to speak to him, and Mr. Dibell was a young man. Would it be possible for him to tell him all that was in his heart? And could he ask him to explain the words that held for him such painful meaning?

"Quince is to stay with us two months, Mr. Dibell," Merry began. "Won't you come and see us while he is there?"

"I will, Merry—yes I will. But Quince is to remain here to-day for Sunday-school, is he not?"

"Oh yes, but—" his cheeks reddening.

"But what, Merry?"

"You see, he can't get acquainted with you, you've so many to talk to."

"And you want he should know me?" laughing and showing his fine even teeth.

"Yes, I see you want I should go out and see your new friend, and I want to go."

Mrs. Chase had a large class of boys. Quince was glad that she would be his teacher; he was sure that he could listen, if he could not ask questions. And to listen to Mrs. Chase would be to learn something new.

If Mr. Chase sometimes stayed at home, he never absented himself from the house; neither did he make it a social day with his friends. There was reading and singing of hymns at the close of the day, with catechetical questioning and a better supper than usual. Everything in and about the place wore a holiday appearance. It was God's day; and when the family separated for the night, they went with brains rested and hearts cheered for the toil of the coming week, and with a joyful sense of the truth that home is the dearest spot on earth and the hours of the Lord's Day evening the best of the whole week.

Whether it was early or late when Quince went to his room, he found time to look at the stars. Quivering in the distance or fixed in matchless splendor, he traced their course and called them by name. They were not in his eyes illuminating points, but habitable worlds. He liked to think of them as the "many mansions." There was reality

in this; he could see them, and the sight of them was a visible demonstration of the truth, as clearly to be understood as a mathematical problem, that God created the heavens and the earth and his hand held them.

Quince did not doubt, in the sense of disbelieving, that the Bible was the word of God; his doubts were not of God, but of himself. If he was, through circumstances beyond his control, outside the pale of God's mercies, yet how good God had been to him! and this goodness and this kindness called for gratitude. Still, God's law could not be broken; he had said it, and it must be accomplished "unto the third and fourth generation."

The more Quince meditated upon what Mr. Dibell had said of doubt, the plainer seemed the reason why Esther herself had been unwilling for him to accept of Ballard's proposition. But did Esther herself really find consolation in the study of the Bible? From words she had dropped, he could hardly believe this. Yet she was resolute with regard to Ballard's influence, simply from the fact, no doubt, that she knew by experience the danger of one beginning to doubt; and her womanly heart was anxious to save him from the fearful course which Mr. Dibell had so faithfully and so eloquently portrayed.

Looking into the night, the lonely grave at Scarborough was always before him. Hugh Mercer had promised to visit it. Should they ever meet again, what a precious time they would have in talking over the days of absence! Would the time ever come? And when it did come, would Hugh stand head and shoulders above him? Conscious of his own striving, Quince always felt that Hugh was pressing forward. Hugh had energy and that rare persistency which is generally sure to succeed.

With thoughts of Hugh Mercer came pleasant memories of Grandmamma Evans and Rachel. Rachel had known and loved his mother, and dear old, kind-hearted Grandmamma Evans was always ready to smooth over Rachel's irritability, and to say pleasant words to him when she saw that he had been pained by the younger woman's hasty expressions. How fond she was of her knitting, and the warm stockings she had prepared for him he had not yet worn out.

Tears rained over his cheeks. He knelt before the casement and gazed up at the stars; then his head was bowed. When he raised it, he was comforted. God's goodness had led him all the way; God's loving-kindness was extended to him—by what right he wisely determined not then to ask.

(To be Continued.)

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Polubet's Select Notes.)

February, 24.—Acts 17: 1-14.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

I. The Christ of the Church.—Ver. 3. The mightier Christ of a Church is, the mightier the Church as an influence for good in the world. Christ disarmed of divine power, shorn of divine authority, stripped of His infinite loveliness, and despoiled of those glories which He shared with the Father before the world was, is only a milder Mahomet, or a finer Joseph Smith.—Dr. F. G. Holland.

II. Effect of opposition to the Gospel. (1) Persecution is like ringing a bell which calls attention to the Gospel from those who would otherwise hear or care nothing about it.

(2) It is like the wind scattering sparks and flaming brands from a burning building.

(3) When Prince Napoleon was at Leghorn, during the Italian war, he was accompanied by M. About, a literary man of rising reputation. About was asked how his book, "The Roman Question," was selling. "Only five or six copies have been sold," replied About. A friend suggested that Napoleon could help the sale by putting it under ban, forbidding it to be sold. He did so. The next day the *Motivour* announced that "The Roman Question" was seized by the Government, and 15,000 copies were sold at once.

(4) In the interpreter's room in *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian is shown a room with a

fire burning against a wall, and Satan pouring on water to put it out, yet the fire did burn higher and hotter. Astonished at this Christian was taken to the other side of the wall where was a man (representing Christ) pouring oil upon the fire. So, however much Satan tries to put out the fire of the Gospel by opposition, the Gospel still increases in power and extent, because Christ is continually sustaining and enlarging the Church with his gracious power.

III. Searching the Scriptures. The Scriptures are like those lands beneath whose soil are many mines of gold and silver and precious stones. There are many treasures, unseen by those who only gather the flowers and fruits on the surface. And the deeper we explore, the greater treasures we shall find.

PRACTICAL.

- I. The Progress of the Gospel.
 1. The Church and the soul are built up by keeping the Sabbath day.
 2. By the true and earnest and regular worship of God.
 3. By the study of the Scriptures.
 4. By preaching salvation through Jesus Christ, the crucified and the risen Saviour.
 5. By Jesus Christ as the foundation of good works and good lives.
 6. By the opposition of bad men.
 7. By turning the world upside down, reversing the maxims, fashions, powers, false theories, and pleasures of the world, and placing all things on the foundations of right, truth, and love.

II. How to search the Scriptures.

1. Let there be daily reading of the Scriptures; an influx of spiritual life upon worldly duties and cares.
2. The Scriptures should be studied sincerely to learn what God would teach us.
3. The Scriptures at times should be searched. Find out all they say on some one topic, as faith, salvation, etc., comparing text with text.
4. The Scriptures should be studied by the aid of such helps as a reference Bible, a Bible text-book, a concordance, a Bible dictionary, and a good suggestive commentary.
5. The Scriptures should be read entirely through, that we may have a general knowledge of all they contain, or we will not know where to find what we need, or even that it is there to find.
6. The Scriptures should also be read specially in those parts which meet our immediate needs and experiences, even though it be but a verse or a promise. A new experience gives a new vision of the Bible.
7. Many passages should be learned by heart, and frequently repeated.
8. Nothing will so ennoble the mind as a continual, sincere, earnest searching of the Scriptures, with the aim to live according to their principles and precepts.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

We find in this lesson varied experiences in the progress of the Gospel. I. The founding of the church at Thessalonica (vers. 1-9). (1) By the Sabbath preaching (2) on Christ as the foundation. (3) By union and increase of numbers. (4) By opposition. II. The founding of the Church at Berea (vers. 10-14). (1) By the study of the Scriptures. (2) By increase of converts. (3) By opposition. Or, we can divide the lesson into two topics: I. The progress of the Gospel, the founding of the churches in Thessalonica, and Berea; and II. Searching the Scriptures, with subdivisions suggested by Practical, above.

MOUSSELINE PUDDING.—Four ounces of pounded sugar, four ounces of fresh butter, the rind of one lemon, and the juice of two with the yolks of two eggs, to be mixed together in a saucepan and stirred on a slow fire until quite hot; then strain the mixture into a basin and amalgamate lightly with it, as in making a soufflé, the whites of the eggs whisked into a stiff froth. Pour into a well-butted mould, and steam for twenty minutes. Serve with any kind of jam sauce.

COCOA SHELLS.—The value of cocoa shells as a drink is hardly thought enough of. They lack the excessive stimulating effects of tea and coffee, but as much milk is needful to make them palatable, they are by this addition made particularly nourishing. They can be boiled for a long time, and drank very freely. They are much cheaper than either tea or coffee, costing about eight cents a pound.

PUZZLES.

CHARADE.

My first's a precious stone;
My next a well known tree;
Or call my first a fruit,
The next a thong will be.
Whichever way you choose:
This puzzle to divide,
You still will find my whole
A powder will abide.

THREE ENIGMAS.

1. My first is in wet, but not in dry.
My second is in run, but not in fly.
My third is in eat, but not in drink.
My fourth is in green, and also in pink.
My whole is the name of a little bird
That often in spring you've seen and heard.
2. My first is in hail, but not in snow.
My second is in hop, but not in dance.
My third is in climb, but not in go.
My fourth is in gallop, but not in prance.
My fifth is in young, but not in old.
My whole is a plant that fears not cold.
3. My first is in Prudence but not in Sue.
My second in Lulu, but not in Rue.
My third is in Ursula, but not in Kate.
My fourth is in Molly, but not in State.
My fifth is in Carrie, but not in Ray.
My sixth is in Ada, but not in Nell.
My seventh is in Katie, but not in May.
My eighth is in Ethel, as all may tell.
My whole is something good and sweet,
Which children always think a treat.

WORD PUZZLE.

1. An ancient coin, and insect small;
'Tis power, 'tis force in great or small.
2. A jewel fit to deck a bride,
Or ripple on the flowing tide.
3. This grows in garden, field and wood;
Prepared, 'tis used for daily food.
4. Of this beware, it stains the soul;
'E'en though this next o'erlays the whole.
5. This steals from poverty its bread;
And on this last is laid its dead.

Ten words will be found in this puzzle the two words of each couplet having the same sound but differing in signification.

BEHEADED ANIMALS.

1. Behead a small animal, and leave a frame for canvas.
2. Behead an animal like a bird, and leave a preposition.
3. Behead an animal, and leave unwilling.
4. Behead a wild animal, and leave a part of the head.
5. Behead an unclean animal, and leave an intoxicating beverage.
6. Behead a sea animal, and leave healthy.
7. Behead a small animal whose fur is valuable, and leave a valuable means of communication.
8. Behead a male animal and leave a propelling instrument.
9. Behead a crafty animal, and leave a useful one.
10. Behead a male animal and leave a boy's play.
11. Behead a relation to the sheep family, and leave a plant in its seed.
12. Behead a fleet animal and leave a verb.
13. Behead a domestic animal and leave near by.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES.

TWO CHARADES.—1. Swordfish. 2. Havelock. RIDDLE.—(Nothing). BEHEADINGS.—1. Rye-ye; 2. Gale-ale; 3. Wlows-hose; 4. Yaw-lawl; 5. Cash-ash; 5. Howl-owl. ENIGMA.—Balsam.

A HINT TO PARENTS.—"Dear mother," said a delicate little girl, "I have broken your china vase." "Well, you are a naughty, careless, troublesome little thing, always in mischief; go up-stairs till I send for you." And this was a mother's answer to the tearful little culprit, who had struggled with and conquered temptation to tell a falsehood to screen the fault! With a disappointed, disheartened look the child obeyed; and at that moment was crushed in her little heart the sweet flower of truth, perhaps never again in after years to be revived to life. Oh, what are a thousand vases in comparison!