

going to happen. An extremely fascinating and truly wonderful book it would have to be, wouldn't it, for young people of all ages love the spice of life, and demand change, movement, novelty and surprise.

More than once I have seen a restless, disinterested class of boys or girls transformed into a wide-awake, intent, eager group when something unexpected or unusual happened in the class. Immediately that keen if-I-don't-watch-out-I'll-miss-something feeling took the place of the old languid it's-only-the-same-old-thing-so-I-can-go-to-sleep attitude, and I had every one of them right with me. Gideon realized this great power of surprise when he planned his torch and pitcher night attack on the Midianites, and he *took them by surprise* in more than one sense of the term. If the Sunday School teacher would plan surprises as ingeniously, there would be no disinterested, absent-minded or restless scholars.

Of course your ability to make these unexpected moves depends largely on how your class is situated and what sort of pupils compose it. The more isolated your position is, the more unusual and novel can be your programme of course, and the younger your scholars, the more variety and movement they will require. But even a teacher without a private class room can plan a number of interesting surprises, if he or she but gives the matter a little thought.

For instance, if you have been in the habit of reading the lesson aloud, verse about, with your class, try to imagine how uninteresting this must be for them, as the

unusual Bible phraseology of a new lesson can convey very little meaning to young minds. Sometimes postponing the reading until the subject matter has been made clear by the teaching of the lesson is an agreeable change, as the boys and girls understand it then and read intelligently. When the lesson is a particularly difficult one, omit the scripture reading altogether and substitute a Bible drill which gives excellent practice in locating passages of scripture, the one who succeeds first having the privilege of reading the selection. At other times, when the lesson is in conversational style, as frequently occurs, have the speeches read in dialogue form, different scholars impersonating the characters.

Often an interesting object can be used to advantage to supply the touch of novelty and surprise, but be sure it illustrates the thought of the lesson and does not distract attention from it. The blackboard with its many possibilities should never be ignored, as it is an ever-ready source of variety and interest, and can transform the often dull review lesson into the most enjoyable one of the whole quarter. Handwork of different kinds is always popular among scholars, but too few teachers attempt it. Pictures and maps used at the right time are reliable means of varying the teaching, and there are so many others which the wise teacher can have "up his sleeve" as it were, ready to produce at a minute's notice, that he should feel equal to any emergency. But if there is plenty of variety and surprise planned beforehand for each class session, there will not be so many emergencies.

## Why Doesn't He Prepare His Lesson?

By REV. JOHN MUTCH, B.D.

"My boy never prepares his Sunday School lesson. When I urge him to do so he always says, 'What's the use? We go over the thing in class and I get it there anyway.' Is there no way to get him to take an interest in it?" The questioner was a mother, and also a Sunday School teacher, at a meeting of Sunday School teachers. What is the answer?

Those who claim that the scholar should first hear of his lesson in the class from the teacher and then do his "research" work can hardly justify the boy, for he was not doing any original work of any kind in connection with his Sunday School lesson.

Supposing the teacher of that boy assigned him a special part of the lesson which he was to make clear to the class and which the class would not have learned if he did not prepare it, would he not take his work more seriously?

He might have been asked the Sunday before to find out what he could about one of the characters in the lesson, or to relate a similar incident in the Bible, or to tell something of a place or custom mentioned.

If he had come unprepared and the teacher had simply said, "I am sorry we cannot find out about this because ——— has not done his share of the work," would he not have taken the next assignment more seriously?

Suppose, too, the question assigned had been one that the teacher knew the boy liked,—such as a point in history if he liked history, or one in geography if he preferred that. Would he not have taken a further interest in his home preparation?

Suppose, further, that the teacher had assigned a question which the boy at once recognized as being of some practical interest to him, such as, "What kind of a boy makes