

That boy in your Sunday-school class who is ready to catch any idea given to him, so susceptible to-day and every day; and how readily he responded to your efforts when you told him about Jesus, the life of beauty and power in Galilee, the death of suffering and sacrifice on Calvary, and in part for him, too! He began to pray that very day. He went among his old playmates, though. They scoffed at his seriousness, mocked at his hopes, and jested about his fears. He had nothing to say in opposition, and the boy who bent his knees in the morning went without a prayer to his bed at night. "Poor, stony ground!" says the Master of the sowing. "When there is any depth of earth in which to sow, where will there be roots to last and shoots to keep green and flourishing?"

He has gone to another plot. "O, these thorns!" he murmurs. "The seed is coming up, but what a struggle it is for life! How choked is all good growth! How feeble! It will soon be strangled out of existence!"

And soon, indeed, the Master of the sowing sighs over the dead hopes buried under the ugly growth of thorns. May not the same scene have been witnessed spiritually in your Sunday-school class? There was that young woman, listening to your words gratefully, receiving them hospitably, nourishing their influence awhile and then exposing the tender life of hope just begun to the choking thorns of a worldly ambition or of pleasures the Spirit cannot hallow! That was the thorn-choked seed the Spirit laments.

But the Master of the sowing has gone to one other field. He stoops once more. He smiles now. He speaks his delight. "Good growth!" he murmurs. "The blessing of the Lord be on thee, O good and fruit-bearing soil!"

This is the heart of the lad to whom you spoke one day in plainness and yet in the faithfulness of love. He accepted the seed with humility. He gave it place deep and large. It rooted firmly. It grew up strong and hopeful. Some day, as the whirl of the sickle is heard in the grain, the Lord of the harvest will say, "Good grain! Harvest of righteousness, of peace, of love, and harvest, of heaven! Thirtyfold, sixty, a hundred! All from good ground, the honest and good heart!"

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *My Heart a Field.*

The blackboard material is abundant for this lesson: Seeds, birds, a sower, rocks, thorns, a foot-path, and a little patch of ripe grain. The teacher who cannot make the pictures can easily cut them from papers and pin to the blackboard. Keep each covered until ready to use.

Tell what a parable is—a story that teaches a lesson—and make a word-picture of Jesus sitting in a boat speaking this parable to the multitude on the shore. Tell the story graphically (you cannot do this without study), and help the children to imagine the people standing on the shore, and wondering what the story meant for them. What does it mean for us? Print "Love one another." Say, "God's word is the seed, and this is one of the little seeds. Nellie and Frank went to Sunday-school. The teacher was the sower there. Any one who teaches God's word is a sower. Nellie opened her heart, and let this little seed about love drop into it. Frank let the birds come and carry away the seed. How? He laughed and whispered, and did not care whether he remembered the lesson or not. When they went home the baby was cross, and Nellie patiently soothed him. Frank teased, and Nellie answered pleasantly. The seed grew in Nellie's heart." Print "Nellie." Make a heart around the name; over it, "Good Ground." Tell of Mary, who thought she

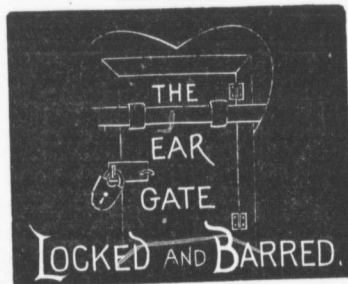
would begin right away to love and be kind to others, but who got angry very soon and gave up trying. Make a heart around her name, and over it print "Stony Ground." In a similar way illustrate the way-side hearing, and show what the weeds and thorns mean.



Make a large heart. Print "My Field," and help children to see what the "good ground" is which each one may have—an honest, hearing, loving, faithful, persevering, fruit-bearing heart. Show two specimens of some kind of fruit—one fair and beautiful, the other poor and unsightly. Good fruit grows from good seed sown on good ground. Teach that Jesus only can make our heart's soil good by coming to live in it. Teach,

"God make my heart a fertile field,
A hundredfold in fruit to yield."

Blackboard.



SUGGESTIONS FOR BLACKBOARD REVIEW. Commence by asking questions on the leading points of the lesson. Next, ask some one to repeat the Golden Text; then have the entire school repeat it. Point to the board. What is this curious design? A heart with a door in front. What does the board say? It says, "Locked and barred." Let us see what it is that locks, and what it is that bars the door. Surely it will be hard work to enter a heart past such an obstacle. There are several avenues to the heart. One is the eye-gate, and another is the ear-gate. What was it that the Golden Text said? "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear." So it is the ear-gate that we talk about in this lesson, because we have learned from it that the hearers of God's word do not always receive it in their hearts. Write the words on the door. Let the scholars tell from the teachings of today's lesson what are the several causes that bolt and bar the door of the heart, and prevent it from being open to receive the good seed. The causes are carelessness, worldliness, etc.

Berean Methods.

The Teachers' Meeting.

A word-picture of the lesson surroundings: lake, boat, shore, multitude, Saviour, sower at work, fields, etc.... Purpose of teaching by parable: necessity for Jesus now sifting his followers.... Ask for description of four kinds of soil here named.... Illustrations of different kinds from Scripture: 1.) Way-side—Pharisees, Felix. 2.) Stony—Rich young ruler, the scribe of Matt. 8. 19, 20. 3.) Thorns—Lot in Sodom, Demas, Judas. 4.) Good

ground—Ethiopia. How to hear the Word. Willingly. 2.) Siftings of the parables to save us. 3.) Many heard but hearing gives of character. 4.) Love and faith the development.

References.

663; the way-side. 4: Prose, 1089. 11808, 11809, 5. 1774, 1190, 11. Prose, 4008, 9. 11124, 11123, 9230, 6234.

ANALYTICAL.

THE SOWER.

I. THE SOWER. A sower was sowing seed. "He that sows the seed."

II. THE SEED. The seed is the Word. "The word of God."

III. THE WAY-SIDE. Some fell by the way. "He that sows the seed."

IV. THE ROCKY PLACE. Some fell on the rocky place. "He that sows the seed."

V. THE THORN-BUSH. Some fell on the thorn-bush. "He that sows the seed."

VI. THE GOOD GROUND. Some fell on the good ground. "He that sows the seed."

VII. THE HEART. The heart is the field. "The heart is the field."

VIII. THE HEART GATE. The heart gate is the ear. "The heart gate is the ear."

IX. THE HEART GATE. The heart gate is the ear. "The heart gate is the ear."

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