

The Sand Fort.

THE children at the seashore
Were playing on the sand ;
"Let's make a fort," cried Bertie,
"Broad and high and grand."
"I'll bring the sand," said Edna ;
"Bertie'll pack it tight ;"
And little May stood gazing
To see if all went right.

They heard the wild waves roaring,
Breaking on the shore ;
The tide they never heeded,
Rising more and more.
They were so busy building,
Of course they would forget,
But quick enough they scampered
When their feet were wet

"We'll run and get dry stockings,
And come again," they said ;
"We'll have our castle builded
Before we go to bed."
They were so sure, the children ;
But when with setting sun
Back to the spot they hastened,
Behold ! their fort was gone.

For oh, my dears, the water
Had washed it all away !
Sand-houses never tarry
Longer than a day.
Since all our earthly pleasures
Are houses built of sand,
We'll seek for something better—
Something that will stand.

Teachers' Department.

Preparation for Teaching.

BY EGBERT L. BANGS.

How shall the Sunday-school teacher prepare himself to meet his class? He needs two kinds of preparation—that of the head and that of the heart. I shall speak only of his intellectual preparation, and shall describe a method that I have found very useful in the conduct of a Bible-class.

First, consider the lesson without note or comment. Try to imagine that you are reading it for the first time in your life. Each verse thus considered will be likely to suggest some question to your mind. Write down all such questions. Then call to mind the different members of your class, and try to put yourself in their places. Look at the lesson from their mental stand-point, and write down such questions as you think would be likely to arise in their minds. The work is then blocked out, the questions as yet remaining unanswered. It is to be presumed that the teacher will use some one of the excellent lesson-helps that are now so abundant.

Taking that, and reading it carefully, he will come upon answers to at least a part of the questions that he has noted down. It will interest him to see how his own views are sometimes confirmed and sometimes modified—for he comes to his lesson-help with some opinions that are the inevitable result of his carefully framed questions.

He will also find that some new questions will arise. Put these new-comers down on paper among their kindred, under their respective verses. This part of the work—the breaking-up of the ground—should be done in the early part of the week, and always before the teachers' meeting.

Take the material you have collected when you go to the teachers' meeting. Don't forget, also, to take a lead pencil. When you have entered upon the consideration of the lesson, you will be very likely to discover that there are always two sides, and sometimes even three, to a question.

One of the teachers, it may be, is conservative.

He will scrutinize sharply any new interpretation of precious old truths. Another has been pestered with sceptical doubts. He does not hesitate to state his opinions, lest some one should doubt his orthodoxy. Each mind in the teachers' class acts upon the lesson like a cog in the wheel of a cider-mill. The juice must come out.

It will be very strange if our teacher, who came with questions in his pocket and on his mind, does not, from this contact of mind with mind, get some new light.

After the teachers' meeting, at your convenience, read carefully the lesson comments in all the papers you have access to, noting whatever is valuable. Then you have your material in hand.

The next step should be to classify it. Some of the publications for the use of teachers, noticeably "The Pilgrim Teacher," arrange each lesson by topics—an excellent idea. Let our teacher now take these topics and arrange his material logically under them, with all the thoughts upon each in perfect order.

But, says one, that will take time and labour. Yes, it will; but if you grudge these you have no business to be a teacher. By such a course of thought and study, begun early in the week, the lesson is on the teacher's mind all the time. Why should it not, then, be under perfect command on Sunday?

With a lesson so studied, a fair average teacher can hardly fail to interest a class. If he fails to interest them he can be of very little use to them, for Bible-classes and Sunday-school classes do not remain after the morning service simply to be bored. They can have a pleasant time at home, and are very likely to stay there if not interested in class.

Intemperance and Vice.

DR. BARNARDO, the English philanthropist, writes thus:—"In the daily course of my rescue work, my path is strewn with wreckage from the drink traffic. Unhappy children, the direct victims of the system, meet me at every turn, and for this and other reasons I have long felt that manufacturers or vendors of drink, distillers, brewers, publicans, and the like, should not be invited to take prominent positions in such Christian and philanthropic work as ours; and that their doing so would be manifestly inconsistent, and is calculated to bring all such work into contempt.

"The independent testimony of judges, medical men, and others competent to speak with authority, is unanimously to the effect, that an enormous proportion of the crime, pauperism, and disease in the community is caused by its drinking habits. It was with these facts in view—facts borne home upon me every day in my own direct hand-to-hand conflict with the worst phases of life in our overcrowded cities—that I arrived at the judgment already announced. I have, therefore, never willingly associated myself or the 'Homes' with the patronage of brewers and distillers, although by taking such a course, no doubt, I have lost large sums of money which would otherwise have been gladly given for the support of our work.

"But I think it right to add, that I have not the least objection, *per se*, to receive for the maintenance of my poor children the money which brewers, distillers, or publicans may feel disposed to send me; far from it, for if I and others are right in saying that an enormous amount of the crime, destitution, and child-suffering of our great cities is caused through the very success of manufacturers and vendors of strong drink, then, surely, it is but a logical sequence that a considerable share of the means which these possess should go

to repair the wounds which their awful traffic has inflicted.

"Take but one instance. Some time ago a woman was tried and sentenced to imprisonment for neglecting and otherwise cruelly ill-treating her poor little baby. When sober, the woman appeared to be at times affectionately disposed to her child, but when under the influence of drink, her mania took the form of downright and unreasoning hatred to the unfortunate baby whom she had borne. The wretched little mite, reduced to a skeleton, and covered with marks of ill-treatment, came into my care after the mother's committal to prison. But some time elapsed before I discovered that the child was *quite blind!* And then inquiry and investigation revealed this terrible—this almost incredible fact. The miserable mother had deliberately placed the child on her lap, and, with a needle, had pricked both its eyes, so that the vitreous humour had escaped! She boasted of this in drink to a neighbour; but no part of it transpired at the trial, nor was she punished for the offence. It was only when the marks of the needle were observed on each eye after the child's admission here, that inquiries were instituted, with the result that this terrible tale was proved to be true in every particular.

How Girls Can Follow Jesus.

A TEACHER asked four girls in her class: "What have you done this week to follow Jesus?"

The first answered: "I have prayed every day."

"That is right," said the teacher; "for Jesus often prayed."

The second answered: "I have read the Bible every day."

"That is also like Jesus," was the teacher's answer.

The third said: "I have been good at school."

"Just what Jesus would have done in the same place," was the kind reply.

The fourth girl hesitated, but at last almost whispered, as if ashamed of herself; "I washed the dishes for mother."

The other girls smiled; but the kind teacher was pleased with the answer, and explained to the class that Jesus wanted us to follow him, by doing cheerfully and well all that we ought to do. "Jesus," said she, "worked at the carpenter's trade, and nobody who follows him need be ashamed of work."

So dish-washing and scrubbing and helping father and mother are a part of religion; and in doing them we are serving God and making ourselves and the world better and happier.

Some children, and some older people, too, think that to be religious you must always look sober and never play. They tell us that Jesus often wept; but never was known to smile. These people do a great deal of harm to religion. Jesus went to marriages and to feasts, and his whole life was a cheerful doing of duty. In following Jesus we have a great deal of happiness and joy.

A little girl heard a lady say one day: "I think Susie is a Christian." Susie was a girl that she often played with, and she felt sad, for she thought Susie would not play any more. But the very next day Susie, all smiles, came to her and wanted her to play. At play she did something that vexed her, but Susie did not speak unkindly. Her mother called her to go on an errand; and, although interested in the game, she obeyed at once. Susie was a happier girl than she was before, and soon her playmate also wanted to be a Christian.

Children, it is good and wise to walk in the footsteps of Christ, for that will take us to where he has gone—to heaven.—S. & Hise.