

With much caution, so as not to attract attention, he did as I requested and he held the bottle firmly between his warm knees. Having no corkscrew, he slowly dug out the cork with his pocket knife. Meanwhile, of course the beer was getting hotter and hotter. Those who remember him—and I am very sure there are very many of our ministers and churches who do—will recollect that he was extremely fastidious about his dress. His shirt bosom and cuffs were always pure and white. We wore both supremely expectant.

But no clap of thunder I ever heard—and I have heard some tremendous claps—ever amazed, and for a few moments so confounded and alarmed me, as did the loud bursting of the cork from the overheated bottle. It struck the ceiling of the car like a bullet. The beer foam spurted fiercely, straight into the white shirt bosom, over his hands and arms, and full into his face. He made matters worse by persisting in endeavours to stop the forceful beer-flow with his thumb, which, of course, intensified its force, in more general directions. The climax was reached when the car resounded with the roars of its passengers. Then I exclaimed, "For mercy's sake throw that abominable thing out of the window!"

He did so, with tremendous energy. My brother's disgust at his condition was simply indescribable, and I cheered him myself by saying:

"Thank the Lord we are among total strangers who don't know who we are, and whom we shall never see again."

Judge then, who can, my alarmed astonishment when more than two years afterwards, at Saratoga, a fine looking gentleman stopped me on the street, and, with a beaming countenance said:—"Mr. Baldwin, I am really delighted to meet you again."

Thanking him for his kindness, I expressed my regret that I did not remember when or where we had met before. "Oh," he laughingly replied, "I was in the car down in Georgia when that beer-bottle burst!"—*Temperance Record.*

WHERE WAS THE PLACE CALLED

From an illustration under the above title by Rev. Dr. Charles S. Robinson, in the November *Century*, we quote the following: "The only representative site for Calvary now offered pilgrims in Jerusalem is found in a couple of rooms inside the old edifice; one is owned and exhibited by the Greeks, another by the Latins. These share the same disability; both—since the Church is already so full of traditions on the ground floor—had to go up a flight of stairs into free space nearer the roof. And there it is, amidst tawdry curtains and gilt bedizenments of candles and altar-shrines, that this ancient spot upon which the cross of Jesus Christ rested is pointed out, and the veritable hole is shown in which it was planted. And the thieves' crosses—a decorous but rather inadequate distance of five feet between them on the right and left of the middle one—are ranged alongside. And down underneath, far below, across some intervening space left by grading away the actual soil of the hill, so we are sagely told, is the grave of Adam! Tradition has related that at the crucifixion of Jesus some drops of blood fell through upon Adam's skull and raised him suddenly to life; and there are commentators who declare that so the prophecy quoted by the Apostle Paul (Ephesians v. 14) was well fulfilled; 'Awake, thou Adam that sleepest [for thus the former versions read in the text], and arise from the dead, for Christ shall touch thee.' The art-people say that this is the origin of the fact that, in those early rude representations of the death of our Lord a skull is introduced.

"Can any man of sensibility be blamed if he makes an imperious demand that something more—something else at least—shall greet him in answer to his question, Where was our Lord crucified? If there should be no other advantage gained by the acceptance of a new site as now proposed, this would be enough; it would put an end to the awkward and offensive impositions daily exhibited under the roof of the filthy old church. They are a standing mockery of the claims of the Christianity they profess to uphold. Those ceremonies of Easter at the tomb where our Lord is

declared to have been buried are a caricature of an event so glad and holy. The struggle around the flames that are chemically forced out of the smoky hole in the sepulchre, so that devotees in frantic zeal may light their lamps, brings death from the trampling of thousands, fills the house with howls that put heathenism to shame, and sends true believers away with an infinite disgust and horror deep in their hearts. How long must such a scandal be patiently endured?"

READING-UNIONS.

(*Martha Van Marter, in the Sunday-School Journal.*)

Last summer, on a steamboat, a pleasant faced lady attracted our attention. She was occupied in reading, much of the time, and when, presently changing her seat, she took a position where we could not fail to see the open page of the book she was so evidently enjoying, all the pleasant impression she had made was destroyed. We knew she could not possibly read the wattery, would-be witty, but really vulgar book which she held, and still be a woman of mind and heart.

And yet, God had given her both, but she had denied the one, and dissipated the other! And all, perhaps, because in her early youth she had not been wisely directed and led in the formation of her mental habits.

Just at this point the wise Sunday-school teacher may give help of untold value. Children are not only intensely active, but they are intensely social little beings. They dearly love to be doing something, and they love to be doing it in each other's company. Mind acts upon mind and heart upon heart, and "union" is just as certainly "strength" among little people as elsewhere.

There has never been a time when our youth were in greater need of help and guidance in the matter of reading than now. The flood-gates of wish-washy, semi-vulgar, wholly unsafe literature seem to be opened, and many and many a young life is being wrecked because there is nobody who cares enough to reach out a helping hand.

What can the Sunday-school teacher do? Advise? Warn? Preach? No; act, act, act! Get in ahead. Pre-empt the ground. Dispute Satan's right to these fair fields. Put in the right kind of seed, and that implies careful watching of the seed. You say that you can advise concerning the books that the children draw from the library, but what more can you do? After all, they will only read the things they like. Then help them to like the right things!

But how? you ask. One will take one way, and one another, providing any way at all is taken. But why may not some plan like this be tried: Propose a class reading-union. Have a little book in which each child's name is entered, and the kind of reading that he likes best—biography, history, romance—noted. Then study the school library, with your pupil's tastes in your mind. Make a list of the best books under each head, and be ready to recommend such books. Encourage the children to keep little blank books in which they enter the names of all books read, and their thoughts concerning them. Get the class to come together a few minutes before the opening of the school, and talk over their reading during the week. They will come if you do, and the little comments and questions upon the reading will often be a means of real help. The very fact that their Teacher is interested in what they read, will stimulate the young readers.

Beside this general oversight of the reading of library books, the teacher who has the time will do well to meet the "union" for an hour once a week to read with them some interesting book, somewhat in advance of their other reading, that they may get the mental exercise of stretching up for some of their food. But be sure that the food is worth reaching after!

A number of years ago, a lady in a mission school in a large city had a class of street-boys who began to feel too old for the Sunday-school. She proposed a sort of reading union to them, and came the next Sunday armed with "Ten Times One is Ten." The boys became deeply interested in the story, and, seizing upon the thought of the book, were eager to make it practical in their lives. And they did!

You may smile at the thought of street-boy philanthropy, but this class became philanthropists in a real sense; and to-day the boys of that class, no longer boys, are men of larger, better growth than they could have been without the help of that noble book brought to bear upon them by the living, loving teacher.

A heaven-inspired love and care for the souls intrusted to our guidance, will lead to many and many a device for their good. May not some such plan help in the moulding of young lives? "He that winneth souls is wise."

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(*From International Question Book.*)

LESSON IV.—JANUARY 27.

FORGIVENESS AND HEALING.—Mark 2:1-12.

COMMIT VERSES 10-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.—Ps. 103:3.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Jesus Christ forgives the sins of all who come to him in faith.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Mark 2:1-12.
T. Matt. 9:1-8.
W. Luke 5:17-26.
Th. Acts 3:1-11.
F. Ps. 32:1-11.
Sa. Ps. 51:1-19.
Su. Isa. 55:1-13.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. *Entered Capernaum*: on the return from his first tour of Galilee. *In the house*: either his own home (Matt. 4:23) or that of Peter. 2. *The word*: the word or message from God. 3. *Sick of the palsy*: palsy is short for paralysis, a disease of the nerves which destroys the power of motion or of feeling, or both. 4. *Could not come nigh him for the press*: or crowd, which filled not only the room but the court or area around which the house was built. The crowd extended even into the street. *They uncovered the roof*: the common houses, such as this probably was, were low, with flat roofs, covered with tiles or earth, and with stairways from the street to the roof. What these four did was not uncommon in the East. *The bed*: a small mattress, or blanket, perhaps upon a low light frame. 5. *Their faith*: the faith of the man and his friends. Jesus saw their hearts, and they proved their faith by overcoming difficulties. *Thy sins be forgiven*: his first need and desire. 6. *Scribes*: leading men and teachers among the Jews. These had come up from Jerusalem and elsewhere (Luke 5:17) to see what Jesus was doing. 7. *Blasphemies*: evil speaking of God and religion; acting as if he could do what God only does. 8. *Whether is easier to say*: not which is easier to do, but to prove the truth of what you say. As, for instance, it is not as easy to speak Chinese or French, but it is easier for one who is ignorant to say that he can speak Chinese, for few could detect his pretensions; but multitudes could detect his pretensions to French. 9. *But that ye may know*: by a divine act which they could see he proves the reality of the other divine act they could not see.

SUBJECT: FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION THROUGH FAITH.

QUESTIONS:

I. THE SCENE (vs. 1, 2).—Where did Jesus preach on his return to Capernaum? What kind of an audience did he have? Who had come from a long distance to hear him? (v. 6; Luke 5:17.) What attracted so many people? What did Jesus preach? (Matt. 4:17; 13:19, 31.)

II. THE MAN WITH THE PALSY: A TYPE OF SINNERS (v. 3).—Who was brought to the house during the preaching? What is the palsy? In what respects is paralysis a type of the moral disease of sin? Can the sinner cure himself? Should we be as earnest to be delivered from sin as this man was to be saved from his palsy?

III. BROUGHT BY OTHERS TO JESUS (vs. 3, 4).—Why did the paralytic desire to go to Jesus? In what way was he brought? What kind of a bed was this? What do the four helpers of this sick man teach us about bringing others to Jesus?

What difficulties did the four helpers encounter? Describe the Oriental houses. What kind of roof was broken through? What do the four helpers teach us about enterprise, ingenuity, and earnestness in bringing men to Jesus?

IV. FAITH IN JESUS (v. 5).—Whose faith did Jesus see? How had they shown their faith? Do difficulties increase our faith? Why does God permit so many hinderances in the way of those who seek salvation? Why is faith necessary to forgiveness and salvation?

V. FORGIVENESS OF SINS (vs. 5-8).—What did Jesus say to the paralytic? May the sick man have desired this most in his heart? Was it a greater blessing than being healed? What is the forgiveness of sins? Do we need the blessing? Who made objection to what Jesus did? What did they call it? Was it "blasphemy"? How did they argue it to be blasphemy? (v. 7.) Would it have been blasphemy if Jesus were not divine?

VI. SAVED (vs. 9-12).—How did Jesus answer them? State his argument in your own words. What did he now do for the sick man? How could he take up his bed? How would his doing this show his faith? Would it strengthen his faith? Would it show the multitudes that he was really cured?

What does Jesus ask us to do when we seek to be saved? Does the doing show our faith, and increase it? What was the effect on the multitudes?

LESSON V.—FEBRUARY 3.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.—Mark 4:10-20.

COMMIT VERSE 20.

GOLDEN TEXT.

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.—Mark 4:23.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

We should receive the good seed of God's Word in honest and good hearts, and bring forth much fruit.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Mark 4:1-20.
T. Matt. 13:1-23.
W. Luke 8:1-18.
Th. Ps. 120:1-6.
F. 1 Tim. 6:6-21.
Sa. Gal. 5:1-10.
Su. Gal. 5:16-28.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER is told in the previous verses. Probably they could see at that time all the kinds of soil and the results, pictured before their eyes.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

10. *Asked of him the parable*: the interpretation of the parable he had just spoken. 11. *The mystery*: the things hitherto hidden, but now revealed by Christ. The disciples were obedient and teachable, and therefore could learn more. *Unto them that are without*: without the circle of Christ's followers, outside of the number who obeyed God. 12. *Seeing*: they may see and not perceive; the truth could not be given to them clearly because they would have made a bad use of it, to the injury of themselves and others. Even in this case God wanted them to see and believe and be saved. *Let them should be converted*: not that Christ taught in parables for this end; but they would not hear and understand, lest they should be converted. 13. *The sower*: Jesus, the apostles, and all who teach and preach God's word. *The seed*: God's word of truth. The soil was the hearts of men. 14. *Way side*: the trodden paths or roads which ran near or through the grain fields. There were no fences or hedges. These hearers are those whose hearts are hardened by neglect and sin, so that truth makes no impression, and the wicked one, represented by the fowls, plucks away the good seed. Note that the wicked one cannot take away the good seed unless we let him. He cannot destroy the seed if the soil is good. 15. *Stony ground*: rocky; not fields full of stones, but a thin layer of soil over flat rocks. The soil is warm in the sun, and the seeds spring up very soon, but the soil soon becomes dry. *Receive it with gladness*: these hearers are those easily moved by excitement, and the feelings of those around them, but they do not become Christians in heart. Their principles and character are not changed. 16. *Persecution for the word's sake*: as soon as any trials come which test their principles, they fall. 17. *Thorns*: growing by the edges of the fields. These grow up faster than the grain, and shut off the sun and absorb the richness of the ground. 18. *Cares of this world*: anxieties about earthly things, too absorbing interest in them. *Deceitfulness of riches*: riches deceive in making people expect more from them than they can give; including pursuit, disappointing people continually. *Choke the word*: these things take up so much time and attention that people neglect religion and goodness and heaven.

SUBJECT: VARIOUS WAYS OF TREATING GOD'S WORD.

QUESTIONS.

I. SOWING IN PARABLES (vs. 10-13).—What is the question did the disciples ask? What did Jesus speak in parables? Explain what was Christ's desire for them all? (Ezek. 33:30-32; 33:11; Eph. 5:14; John 3:16.)

II. THE SOWER AND THE SEED (v. 14).—Have you read the parallel accounts? Do you suppose Christ could have seen any sower at that season? Describe the fields in which the sowing was done? Why did he go forth? Who is the great Sower of good seed? Who else should be sowers? (Isa. 55:10; Ps. 126:5.) What is the good seed? (Luke 8:11.) In what respects is it like seed?

III. THE GOOD SEED BY THE WAYSIDE (v. 15).—What is meant by the wayside? How could seed get there? Who are represented as receiving the seed by the wayside? Who by the birds of the air devouring the good seed? (v. 4.) How does Satan take away the good seed from men's hearts? Give some examples of wayside hearers. (Ex. 5:2; Acts 21:25; 26:23.)

IV. GOOD SEED ON STONY GROUND (vs. 16, 17).—What is meant by stony ground? Why would the seed here spring up unusually quickly? Why would it wither as quickly? Who are represented by such soil? Why do they fall back so soon? How can we tell whether we are Christians or not? (Rom. 2:7; Col. 1:23; Rev. 2:10, 26.) Give some examples of stony-ground hearers. (1 Sam. 19:20-24; 28:16-19; Hos. 13:1-3; Gal. 5:7.)

V. GOOD SEED AMONG THORNS (vs. 18, 19).—How could good seed fall among thorns? In what ways do thorns choke the good seed? What is represented by the thorns? How do these things interfere with our religious growth? Are they wrong in themselves? What should we do with them? (Matt. 6:33.) Give some examples of thorny-ground hearers. (2 Pet. 2:15; Matt. 27:3, 4; Acts 5:1, 2.)

VI. THE GOOD SEED IN GOOD SOIL (v. 20).—What is meant by good ground? (Luke 8:15.) What was the usual yield of grain in Palestine? What makes the difference in the fruitfulness of Christians? What fruit does Christ want us to bear? (Matt. 5:3-10; Gal. 5:22, 23.) How can we bear much fruit? (John 15:5.) Are we sure of good fruit if we sow good seed? (Ps. 126:6.)

LESSON CALENDAR.

(*First Quarter, 1889.*)

- Jan. 6.—The Mission of John the Baptist.—Mark 1:1-11.
- Jan. 13.—A Sabbath in the life of Jesus.—Mark 1:21-34.
- Jan. 20.—Healing of the Leper.—Mark 1:35-45.
- Jan. 27.—Forgiveness and Healing.—Mark 2:1-12.
- Feb. 3.—The Parable of the Sower.—Mark 4:10-20.
- Feb. 10.—The Fierce Demoniac.—Mark 5:1-20.
- Feb. 17.—The Timid Woman's Touch.—Mark 5:25-34.
- Feb. 24.—The Great Teacher and the Twelve.—Mark 6:1-13.
- Mar. 3.—Jesus the Messiah.—Mark 8:27-38; 9:1.
- Mar. 10.—The Childlike Spirit.—Mark 9:33-42.