

abound to their account and finds in these outward expressions of personal regard, intimations that his labour, after all, is not in vain in the Lord. Nobody ever thinks of paying a carpenter or a physician by making him a present which may amount to a third or a fourth of what the service rendered is really worth. Such a course is never tried except with the minister, and the sooner it is universally dropped with him also so much the better. Better far that there should be no presents given from one year's end to the other, if a fair living, reasonable salary has been regularly paid, than that the minister should be periodically assured that he lives in the affections of his people, that he is altogether a wonderful character, with rare and varied gifts and graces, and that young and old scarcely know what to do with and for him in order to shew how they relish his preaching, are profited by his conversation, and stimulated by his life, while, at the same time, the stipend is distressingly small, and the periods of payment are exceedingly irregular. It is quite true that congregations, like individuals, are to be judged according to what they have and not according to what they have not. This is, of course, always taken for granted. But allowing for this, are all the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Canada doing what is fair and reasonable with those whom they have deliberately invited to take the oversight of their souls and to instruct them in the great matters connected with life and salvation? Harsh words are worse than useless in connection with such a matter. It is easy to sneer at congregational niggardliness and to make a jest of the absurdity of a man paying three or four times more, per annum, for instructing a single child in the various branches of a secular education than he is willing to give for the instruction of the *whole* family, himself included, in what he *says* he believes to be of far higher moment and fraught with far more important issues. Such conduct is very absurd and may be very easily made to appear exceedingly whimsical. But, after all, it is too sad to be made a jest of and it is one of those evils which a sneer will neither cure nor kill. The amount of shabby, unhandsome treatment, which ministers have received at the hands of those from whom better things might have been expected, has been very great. Paul got his full share of it, and many who have largely partaken of Paul's spirit, have done the same thing. It is a pity that such should have been the case. It is also to be regretted that there should be so much of it still. Nor are we to say that the fault lies always, and only, with the congregation. In a good many cases there may be found more or less wrong on both sides. This, at any rate, is certain, whoever may be to be blamed, that that congregation has profited very little by the means of grace with which it has been favoured, if up to its ability, or even beyond, it be not ready to shew that it acts on the principle that "the labourer is worthy of his reward." As the tone of piety rises, so will this grace of liberality, along with kindred ones, make itself more and more felt and manifest. On the other hand, where that piety burns low, and the things that remain are ready to die, argument, however cogent, will have little effect, and fault-finding, however deserved, instead of removing the evil, will be in danger of only completing the ruin. In many cases it is as much want of thought, as anything else, which leads congregations to pay their ministers so inadequately. May the ministers not be sometimes in fault in not sufficiently instructing their people in this department of Christian duty?

HINTS, HERE AND THERE, FOR TEACHERS.

You know what Bacon says, in his essay on Studies: "Reading maketh a full man." Some one else says, "One needs to *know* an hundred times as much as he is expected to *teach*." So the Sunday school teacher must *read, read, read*. What shall I read? Commentaries? Yes, if they are good; and the more of them the better. But in these two lines of reading, especially, the teacher will find large help in fitting himself to tell his class the story of the life of Jesus.

1, *Harmony of the Gospels*. We have in the four Gospels four lives of Christ, alike in some respects, unlike in others. Read them side by side; when studying Matthew's account of the babyhood of Jesus see if the other writers tell you anything Matthew does not, get the whole story, and as far as possible, in its order.

Now for instance. We want to know the order of happenings to the Child-Saviour up to the end of Matthew's second chapter, where our present lesson leaves us.

We get nothing from Mark or John, but Luke gives details which are wanting in Matthew; the birth; the angel's announcement to the shepherds; the visit of the shepherds to the Holy Family the same night; the circumcision eight days after; the presentation in the temple at Jerusalem, forty days after, when Simeon and Anna recognize the Messiah. All these incidents of the first two months of Jesus' life given in the second chapter of Luke, Matthew says nothing about, while Luke in turn says nothing about what apparently follows right along after, viz. the visit of the Magi, the flight to Egypt, the massacre of the innocents, the attempted return to Bethlehem, the two narratives coming together in the residence in Nazareth (Matt. ii. 23 and Luke ii. 39). The different evangelists continually supplement each other in this way, and should by all means be studied together by the teacher who tries to give his class the connected story.

2, *Other lives of Christ*.—If you have access to Farrar's, or Andrew's, or Abbott's, or Beecher's life of Christ, or any other, by all means read along in the uninspired book the narrative as you are gathering it from the inspired one. A few warm, natural, modern touches, such as Farrar or Beecher know how to give, often brighten up the whole thought about it like dashes of sunlight on a picture in the shade. If you haven't access to any good life of Christ, you couldn't invest a little money better than in buying one.

The primary class teacher has her opportunity in these first lessons of this quarter. Children never tire of the well-told story of the baby Jesus, the shepherds, the wise men. But these two lines of reading, in preparation for teaching, I wish particularly to recommend to teachers of primary classes. Do not read simply to get scraps to deal out to the little ones, but read to fill, *saturate* your own hearts with the story, learn all the incidents of it, form a picture of it in your own thought, and then out of full souls *tell* the story as the desire that your little folks shall hear and remember it shall teach you how. The more you know about it, the more of details, the more of the country, customs, time of the year, everything to help you to *see it yourselves* as a piece of real life, the more graphic and impressive will your telling it be. And I put this on high ground, the ground of *duty*. Think! you are giving immortal minds their first and most tenacious impressions concerning Jesus. How intelligent and accurate your work should be. How should you shrink from the possibility of teaching some wrong thing through ignorance, or failing, through want of interest yourselves, to make these lessons of intense interest to your scholars.

One feature of this lesson, very interesting to me, is the number of times the promise in Ps. xci. 11 and cxxi. 7, is fulfilled. Three times God interposes to save Jesus from harm.

And notice the two things God depended on for the safety of Jesus. The first was *mother-love*. How He exalted mother-love when He trusted His only son to its care. Humanly speaking, for the years of Jesus' infancy, all the destiny of the race needing Christ to redeem them, all the fulfilment of God's purposes in Jesus depended upon the love of Mary for Jesus. Mary's mother-love was the infant Saviour's security against the thousand risks the baby life ran of being crushed out by the hard world into the midst of which it was thrown.

The second thing was *obedience* on the part of those who had Jesus in care. God gave directions, but Joseph and Mary, and the wise men were His agents. All depended on their *obedience*. Suppose the wise men had said, "O, but we must go back to Jerusa-

lem, the king will be very angry with us." Suppose Joseph had said, "I guess there is no danger. At least it's a long, hard journey to Egypt," or, "I'll wait till to-morrow, anyhow." Ah! but what would have become of Jesus if they had not obeyed.

So much depends on obedience to the word or warning of God.

Among all the lessons this day shall give us, let us not forget this most important one.—*Congregationalist*.

MURMURING.

How many of us pass one day in each week without complaint? If we examine ourselves honestly on this point we shall probably find that we are far more guilty than we imagine.

How unpleasant is a rainy day when some rare pleasure has been planned. One says, "Oh dear, it always has to rain when I wish to go anywhere, and this day of all others—why does it rain?" and another, "I don't like such weather as this, do you? I am certain we do not need it, for it has been nothing but rain, rain, rain." We do need it, or it would not be sent. These and similar exclamations may be heard in nearly every household on the occasion of any slight disappointment. Slight, for we do not so readily give way to murmurings under great trials. It is in little things that we are irritated.

How much happier we would all be if we were ready to believe that all is for the best. If it rains, to our inconvenience, let us think that there may be some necessity for it of which we who can see so short a distance know nothing; and whatever happens we should remember that we are not the only ones concerned, and that what seems evil to us may do good to others, also that not only is the present moment affected thereby but that from some seeming present evil a future good may arise.

Looking at the subject even in a worldly point of view we shall see that we are not far-sighted enough to know that all which seems to us evil, is so; and if it may be for our good, why murmur at it?

But the one thing we forget when we complain of what inconveniences us is that all things are ordered by Our Father and that He is the one on whom our censure falls. It is as really finding fault with God to murmur at trials sent by Him as it would be to say, "He does not do all things well." Why then do we hear so many who really love their Saviour complain of those things which God alone controls? Is it not the oft-repeated excuse "We did not think?" If we would remember that it is God with whom we are finding fault, our complaints would be less frequent and a happier as well as better state of things would exist.

Even among those who "know not the Father" there is often enough of reverence to be shocked at the idea of finding fault with Him.

Let us then throughout our life bear well in mind that a kind and wise Father watches over us, leading in the right path, raising us when we stumble, seeing where we fail to see, and never mistaking the way. May we not willingly hear complaints from others but gently remind them by word or look that as not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father's knowledge, so not a vexation crosses our path that is not sent in His love.

When inclined to murmur at the unkindness or thoughtlessness of others toward us, we should consider how far we ourselves are from what our friends wish us to be, often giving them cause of complaint, and may we set them the good example of bearing patiently with them. Then, too, the thought of how far we are from what God wills, should make us humble, and lead us to be patient with one another, even as God who permits and controls all things is patient with us.

THE maelstrom attracts more notice than the quiet fountain; a comet draws more attention than the steady star; but it is better to be the fountain than the maelstrom, and the star than comet, following out the sphere and orbit of quiet usefulness in which God places us.—*Dr. John Hall*.