

GOD'S BOOK AND
GOD'S BOY

A.F. SCHAUFFLER



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God's book and God's boy

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*The James Sprunt Lectures delivered at
Union Theological Seminary in Virginia*

God's Book and God's Boy

✓
By

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Sunday-School Forces," etc.*



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THE JAMES SPRUNT LECTURES

IN nineteen hundred and eleven Mr. James Sprunt of Wilmington, North Carolina, gave to the Trustees of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia the sum of thirty thousand dollars for the purpose of establishing a perpetual lectureship which would enable the institution to secure from time to time the services of distinguished ministers and authoritative scholars outside the regular Faculty as special lecturers on subjects connected with various departments of Christian thought and Christian work. The lecturers are chosen by the Faculty of the Seminary and a committee of the Board of Trustees, and the lectures are published after their delivery in accordance with a contract between the lecturer and these representatives of the institution. The fourth series of lectures on this foundation is presented in this volume.

W. W. MOORE.

*President Union Theological
Seminary in Virginia.*

Preface

THE material contained in this book is based on no inconsiderable experience in handling work along lines of Sunday-school instruction. For many years the author had the privilege of superintending one of the largest mission Sunday-schools in New York City, and for over thirty years he has had the joy of teaching a weekly class for Sunday-school teachers, taking the International Uniform Lessons for his theme. He hopes, therefore, that whatever he has said in the lectures herewith offered to the public will be found to be helpful, and sensible as well. Indeed nothing can be helpful to the Sunday-school work unless it is based on common sense and actual experience.

The author's effort has not been to give an exhaustive presentation either of *The Book* or of *The Boy*. His aim has rather been to view *The Book* from a somewhat unusual standpoint, and to give the teacher, so far as is possible, a more vivid and picturesque grasp of what are called Bible times and Bible characters. In dealing with the scholar the author has also endeavoured to work along a similar line trying to arouse in the teacher a new interest in the personality of the scholar such as shall stimulate him to further study.

With the exception of the lectures on "Joseph" and "Moses," which were delivered in a course at the Bible Teachers' Training School, New York City, all the lectures in this book were delivered at the Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va. They were taken down stenographically, and though corrected by the author, still will doubtless show the defects of extemporary address. It is to be hoped, however, that what they lose along this line may, in part at least, be atoned for by the greater directness that is usually found in extemporary delivery.

It is hoped that these lectures may be helpful both to lay teachers and to the ministry as well. The author's conviction is very profound that, in the average Sunday-school throughout the country, the minister ought to be leader of his teaching force, taking charge of the teachers' weekly meeting for the study of the lesson, and building his teachers up on the sure foundation of the Word. With this hope in view he was glad of the opportunity to address the promising body of theological students at Richmond, and is equally glad to address a larger constituency through the medium of the printed page.

That God's blessing may go with this little book is his earnest desire and prayer.

A. F. S.

New York,

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I

THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE, PLUS WHAT?

MY theme in this course of lectures is twofold, dealing first with *God's Book* and second with *God's Boy*. In handling this twofold theme the limitations of the lecture course naturally prevent any exhaustive treatment either of the Book and its contents or of the Boy, his nature and his needs. My aim will be rather to try and throw light on the Book from a standpoint not often dealt with by commentaries or even ordinary lesson helps.

The lectures on the Book aim to illustrate one of the ways in which the Book may be studied in order to impart to it life and motion. I desire to make it to the teacher more of a living Book than it has been in days gone by.

In dealing with the Boy my aim is to present certain phases of the subject of paidology calculated to stimulate the teacher to realize what a fascinating personality the Boy is and induce him to pursue further the study of how to reach this Boy with this Book.

Here is a boy and in front of him is the teacher. In his hand each holds the Bible. What is this teacher's business? To get that Book into that

boy's mind. That is all. Into that boy's heart no teacher can get the Book. The Holy Spirit does that. But the teacher can get the Book into the boy's head; provided he knows two things—first, the Book; second, the Boy. If he knows only the Book, he will fail. If he knows only the boy, again he will fail. He must know both Book and boy. Then, with God's blessing, he will succeed. To be known, the Book and boy must be studied.

We are often urged by modern scholars to study the Bible as literature, and this contention is right. Only we would utter a caution here. The Bible is not to be studied as a literature on a par with the Koran, the Vedas, the Zend-Avesta, and the Confucian literature. They are literature and the Bible is also literature, but the Bible stands on an eminence by itself. As Mount Blanc towers above the rest of the Alps, so the Bible towers above all the religious literature of the whole world. Nevertheless, the Bible is literature.

Most of our scholars think of it as one book. It is really sixty-six books written by many authors in many times, in many climes, in many different circumstances. Take, for example, the authors. Some of these authors were highly educated men, as, for example, Moses, who contributed so largely to the Old Testament; a man learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. That meant all the wisdom there was in those days. On the other hand, there was Amos, an uneducated man who said of himself that he was neither a prophet, nor

the son of a prophet, but a common herdsman (Amos vii. 14). In the New Testament we have the Apostle Paul, born and bred in the University City of Tarsus, but reared in Jerusalem at the feet of the renowned scholar Gamaliel (Acts xxii. 3). On the other hand we have the Apostle Peter, a fisherman of Galilee, knowing, doubtless, how to read and write, but being otherwise unlearned and ignorant. Thus we have two superbly educated men and two men with very meagre education, combining to contribute to this literature.

We have royal authors, for I doubt not that David wrote some of his songs while on the throne and Solomon wrote nearly all that he wrote of the Proverbs on the throne.

Per contra, we have (if I may be allowed to use the expression) some jail-birds, for Jeremiah wrote a great deal of what he wrote in jail, and Paul, who wrote much behind the bars in prison.

Most of these authors never saw each other; for example, Isaiah never saw Ezekiel; Moses never saw Samuel. Moreover, they wrote in different lands—Moses in the Sinaitic Peninsula; Ezekiel in exile; Paul, the peripatetic preacher, wrote almost everywhere.

Note then the marvel of it all! Men of different social standing, men in widely separated parts of the world, men who had never seen each other, producing a literature of sixty-six books which we yet recognize as one Book. Through it all runs the one divine purpose, showing that through all

these writers there flowed an influence restraining, impelling, guiding, illuminating. And so we do well to call it one Book, though it be a library of sixty-six volumes.

These men wrote according to their individual bent. Those who were poetically inclined broke out in poetry. The more prosaic writers confined themselves to ordinary history. Those who were philosophical dealt with wisdom literature. Those who had a turn towards writing dealt in epistolary writings, and he who closed the volume who was on the Isle of Patmos seeing vision after vision, breaks out into apocalyptic glory. You see then the composite nature of this Book.

I have said that a large part of the Book is poetical. It is hard for many humble Christians to realize there is so much poetry in the Bible, and one reason is that in our poetry rhyme and rhythm are very dominant.

“The Assyrian came down like a wolf on
the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple
and gold.”

You recognize that at once as poetry. But the Hebrew cared nothing in his poetry for rhyme or rhythm. In his poetry the Hebrew cared very largely for what may be called the antiphonal form, or statement, of the poetic idea, or, if I may change the expression, he dealt largely in statement and restatement, in affirmation and response. That

is the main form in which Hebrew poetry is cast. Take any of the Psalms and you will see what I mean. Take Psalm twenty-three: Statement: Jehovah is my Shepherd; Response: I shall not want. Statement: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; Response: He leadeth me beside still waters. Psalm one hundred and three: Statement: Bless Jehovah, O my soul; Response: And all that is within me, bless his holy name. Statement: Bless Jehovah, O my soul; Response: And forget not all his benefits. Statement: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Response: Who healeth all thy diseases.

So it goes, back and forth, back and forth, as though there were two choirs singing, the one giving utterance to the statement; the other pouring forth the response. You realize this when you turn, for example, to the poetic prophecies of Balaam, uttered as he was standing on the mountain and looking over the plain where Israel was encamped. You see the antiphonal nature of his speech when you can read in Balaam's prophecies the statement without the response. Standing alone it will make good sense. Let me now read to you the statement as found in Numbers, twenty-third chapter: "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? For from the top of the rocks I see him. Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone. Who can count the dust of Jacob? Let me die the death of the righteous."

That makes good sense, but you have cut out the

response. Now read it with the statement and the response. Statement: How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Response: And how shall I defy, whom Jehovah hath not defied? Statement: For from the top of the rocks I see him; Response: And from the hills I behold him. Statement: Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone; Response: And shall not be reckoned among the nations. Statement: Who can count the dust of Jacob? Response: Or number the fourth part of Israel? Statement: Let me die the death of the righteous; Response: And let my last end be like his.

When in some such way we grasp the Hebrew concept in this matter of poetic thought, then Hebrew poetry becomes far more entrancing and significant, and we enter into the spirit of the poet of the olden days. I want to recommend very strongly the study of "The Literary Study of the Bible," by Professor Moulton, along this whole line of the setting of Hebrew poetry, especially as he illustrates it in that wonderfully dramatic scene of the song of Deborah and Barak.

Take another instance of the literary form in which the Bible is cast. The book of Jonah has been the most ridiculed book of any in the Old Testament, and yet it is the most artistically constructed of any of the books of the Bible. There are only four chapters, which we might call Strophes, in the book of Jonah, setting forth, however, as no other book in the Old Testament does,

God's universal love and pity for all mankind. Take this division, Strophe One—Theme: Heathen sailors, in great distress, call upon Jehovah and are delivered. Heathen sailors! Far from the Jewish concept was it that heathen sailors might call on the God of Abraham and find response, but in the very first chapter you find that is the truth. Second Strophe (or Chapter)—A Hebrew prophet, in great distress, calls upon Jehovah and is delivered. Third Strophe—Heathen Nineveh, in great distress, calls upon Jehovah and is delivered. Fourth Strophe—Dialogue between Jehovah and Jonah, setting forth God's universal compassion on all of His creatures.

This literature is not only poetical, but it is prophetic. By prophecy I do not mean simply the foretelling of coming events. I am one of those who believe thoroughly that the prophets did foretell events that were centuries in the future, but that was not the major part of the prophet's work. The major part of the prophet's work was the forthtelling of God's will, God's promises and judgments. There are many who seem to think that the prophets wrote their books very much the way a minister writes his sermons. Now if there is one way above another in which the prophet did not work, that is the way. Almost everywhere, if it were possible, the prophet first spoke his message face to face with his hearers. Then he wrote down a condensed account of it, the very heart and kernel of what he had said. Isaiah prophesied for sixty

years, but you can read the whole book of Isaiah in a morning. The major part of what he said has perished, but what he wanted to preserve has been preserved.

Of course, there were times when the prophet could not speak face to face with his audience, as was the case with Jeremiah when he was in jail. So he called for Baruch and dictated to him the message he wanted to give and Baruch wrote it down and read it in the temple (Jeremiah xxxvi.); but that was only because Jeremiah could not do so himself. Ezekiel could not give his message to God's people in Judea face to face because he was in captivity, so he wrote. But whenever they could speak face to face, they always did so.

Bearing in mind, then, the prophetic manner as above suggested, take the book of Amos and realize that this man must have delivered a series of addresses in Bethel where one of the two golden calves had been set up in the northern kingdom, and that what we have here is the very condensed essence of what Amos had to say. Realize the situation. Amos was born in the southern kingdom. He was sent by God to preach against the sins of the northern kingdom. Between the northern and the southern kingdoms there was bitter jealousy. For a southern man to come to the north to rebuke the north for its sins was a most delicate action. In 1861 if any man from south of Mason and Dixon's line had come North to preach to us about our sins I fear very much that he would have

had to return, perhaps more swiftly than he had come, and if at that time a man had come from the North to the South to preach against slavery, probably his return would have been greatly accelerated by your efforts.

Now mark the skill of Amos in putting his message. Use your imaginations here a little and realize that the moment this man appeared in the courtyard of the temple at Bethel they would recognize him from his garb and speech as a man from the south. Nevertheless, a Jew always listens to hear what a man has to say. Now Amos comes into the courtyard of the temple at Bethel and begins: "Thus saith Jehovah; For three transgressions of Damascus, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." That is his theme for the first day. That was good tidings for the Israelites. Damascus was their greatest foe on the northeast, so while this man is prophesying Jehovah's wrath against Damascus I fancy I can see a smile wreathing the faces of many and I hear them say, "He seems to be down on Damascus. That is comforting." So Amos closes his address and goes his way.

The second day. Lo, this prophet appears again. This day his message is as follows: "Thus saith Jehovah; For three transgressions of Gaza, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." On that day as he dwells on the sins of the Philistines I fancy I hear one say to another, "That is fine. Yesterday he was down on Damascus. To-

day he is down on the Philistines. That man is grand." At the close of this address I hear some man saying to Amos, "Is that all that you have to say?" and Amos replies, "No, I will be here to-morrow."

The third day. The crowd begins to increase. The excitement becomes contagious and the crowd eagerly awaits the third message. "Thus saith Jehovah; For three transgressions of Tyrus, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." "Oh," says the Jew, "Tyrus! Mistress of the sea. That concerns us because here is this man prophesying against Tyrus. This man hews to the line and the plummet and though he is from the south, he has discernment. Amos, have you anything more to say?" "Yes, I will be here to-morrow," and they reply, "Good; we will have all our friends here to-morrow to hear you. This is fine."

The fourth day. "Thus saith Jehovah; For three transgressions of Edom, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." Now Edom was she who, in the gorge of Petra, hid always in the rocks and said, "No one shall bring me down," and here was this prophet saying that Edom shall be abased and shall hide in the rocks no longer in safety.

Do you begin to see the excitement accompanying the delivery of the message day after day? Do you see how this crowd, becoming more and more filled with enthusiasm, is gathering in ever increasing numbers to hear what this man has to say? So

it went on. One day, Ammon ; the next day, Moab ; and then there came a day—day number seven—when he fairly startled them. “Thus saith Jehovah ; For three transgressions of Judah, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof.” “What did he say ? Judah ? Why, he is from Judah. Is he down on Judah ?” “Thus saith Jehovah ; For three transgressions of Judah, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof.” Why, that filled them with amazed pleasure ; the idea of this man decrying his own southern kingdom !

Thus Amos is preparing for his ultimate message to Israel and on the last of these consecutive days when the crowd is very great this is the message—“Thus saith Jehovah ; For three transgressions of Israel, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof.” Now he is home. Now he has gotten down to his final message, bringing himself up to it as tactfully as possible. Now he stands before them, as Nathan stood before David when he said : “Thou art the man ;” and here he is saying, “Ye are the people for whom God hath given me a message.”

See ; when you understand the environment, when you grasp the method of this man, everything becomes instantly intense with life. The message becomes living and fascinating.

Yes, I say the Bible is literature. We can say of it as David said of Goliath’s sword, “Give it to me ; there is none like it.”

Take another of these Old Testament passages which you will find in Isaiah, in the tenth chapter, beginning at the twenty-eighth verse. I shall read the passage before I begin to explain it. "He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron; at Mich-mash he layeth up his baggage; they are gone over the pass; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah trembleth; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim; hearken O Laishah, O thou poor Anathoth. Madmenah is a fugitive; the inhabitants of Gebim flee for safety. This very day he shall halt at Nob; he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. Behold, the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, will lop the boughs with terror; and the high of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be brought low."

Now that is about as dry to the average reader as sawdust because he knows very little about the times and circumstances. It is for us to illumine and throw light upon a passage like that so that the reader may understand it and instead of its being as dry as sawdust, it shall be as juicy as grape-fruit.

What was the situation? Sennacherib is marching against Judah and Jerusalem with irresistible power, with outstretched wings like an eagle flying over its prey. City after city goes down. Neither Judah nor Jerusalem has power to resist. Judah trembles and Jerusalem is in fear and Hezekiah is in despair. Just at that juncture it is that Isaiah

gives his divine message and pictures to Judah the oncoming of this victorious host. Town after town, city after city falls, as given in the lines I read, until the enemy reaches Nob, close to Jerusalem. There he is pictured as waving his hand contemptuously over Jerusalem, but there also Jehovah is pictured as lopping his bough and hewing down the high ones, so that his feet do not contaminate the City of David. Knowing that Isaiah was a man to whom God had revealed the future, this message would come to the people like a very message from above, giving Judah deliverance and peace and opportunity for repentance. And, indeed, so it happened. Sennacherib never got into the City of Jerusalem. God lopped his bough. God laid him low and he crept home to meet death in his home and Judah and Jerusalem were delivered.

But I want, if I can, to make this a little more vivid. You must try to use your imaginations, to put life into these things again. So lend me your imaginations for a few moments.

Imagine that Canada were to us the formidable, overshadowing power that the Assyrian was to Jerusalem. Imagine that Canada had started to conquer New York and that we in New York knew that we had no power to resist. On—on—on she comes—irresistibly. Now Canada in marching down towards New York would naturally come across at some central point, say Niagara. Then there would be the following cities that she would

take up on her way down against Manhattan: Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Schenectady, Albany, Poughkeepsie, Tarrytown, Yonkers. That would be the line she would come down; the Mohawk Valley east, the Hudson Valley south. Imagine that we are in New York, excited and filled with fear because Canada is coming and we have no power to resist. Imagine then that some man in New York, known to us as one to whom God often had revealed His will, should come into one of our squares, say Madison Square or Union Square, and we, knowing that he had a message to deliver from God, should gather there to learn what he had to say regarding the oncoming of Canada. Imagine these to be his words, "She has come to Niagara; she has passed on to Buffalo; at Rochester she has laid up her baggage; she has taken up her lodgings at Rome; Syracuse is afraid; Utica has fled; lift up thy voice, O daughter of Schenectady; cause it to be heard even to Albany, O poor Hudson; Poughkeepsie is removed; the inhabitants of Tarrytown gather themselves together to flee, but as yet she shall remain at Yonkers; she shall wave her hand over the city of New York, but there shall Jehovah lop her bough with terror and Canada shall never trod the streets of Manhattan."

See what that means? That is what it meant to them. In that way you begin to see how these prophets in their presentation of their messages always laid right hold of present life. They always had their feet on the sidewalk. Thus we begin

to understand the method of these prophets in the preparation and delivery of their messages.

But my theme was not the study of the Bible as literature, but the study of the Bible as literature, *Plus What?* You may know the Bible as literature from Genesis to Revelation and yet gain no power from it. You may know the Bible critically and yet it may fail to have any influence over your life, governing and shaping your every action. You may know all about the poetry of the Bible, all about the Apocalypse, and still fall short in that which is the most important thing in the sacred volume.

What then is this plus which I am trying to emphasize? It is this, that this Book is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. If I miss that, I miss the plus of it, though I may have all the rest of it. This is where we preachers and teachers of the Word want to bear in mind that while it behooves us to know it all, still we miss the major part of it if we miss the plus.

Week before last I faced in a church on the Bowery in New York four hundred and thirty-seven Bowery beats, mostly down through drink. They were there to celebrate the twenty-second birthday into the Kingdom of God of one of their number—Dave Ranney by name. Twenty-two years ago Dave Ranney was a Bowery beat. As he told me—"I have broken every law of God and man, excepting one; I never murdered. Everything else I have done." Twenty-two years ago a

preacher was preaching on the corner of Bowery and Broome Streets when this tramp sauntered by; heard, began to heed, by God's grace was revolutionized, changed in the twinkling of an eye. For twenty-two years I have watched him, a man regenerated like a flash, and he has stayed regenerated from that day to this; and he got up on the platform and told those four hundred and thirty-seven men off the street what God had done for him.

Suppose I had said to him, "Tell us, Dave, what you know of the antiphonal form of Hebrew poetry." He would have replied, "What did you say? Antiphonal form of Hebrew poetry? I never heard of that." But he does know the fifty-first Psalm and although he does not know it antiphonally, he knows what it means to a sinner. That is the plus of it that Dave Ranney has got. He has got the major part of it. It has transformed him. It has revolutionized him. It has glorified him.

One of our missionaries picked up on a cold winter night on Bleeker Street a poor street-walker. Nellie Conroy was her name. She was in her stocking feet, though there was snow on the ground. She was dressed in calico, though it was bitter cold. The man who kept her was a coloured man, showing how far she had gone down. Our missionary took her up and by God's grace the plus of it came to Nellie and she was revolutionized and metamorphosed. The power of salvation came to Nellie. She was taken to a home and the girls with whom

she used to associate called on her for a while to see her. But Death had laid its hand on Nellie and she talked with them about the change that had come over her. One day she said, "Girls, nothing but the blood of the Son of God could cleanse the sins of Nellie Conroy. They were too dark for anything else." And one day she said to them, "Girls, when the roll is called up yonder and the name of Nellie Conroy is called and I say, 'Here,' won't they be surprised?" That was the plus of it for Nellie Conroy.

One day I was visiting an old and sick parishioner of mine. In the course of conversation I found that he had no clear vision as to the present pardon of his sins.

Upon my asking him, "Do you think your sins are forgiven?" he replied, "I do not know, but I hope that they are." Turning to Romans viii. 1, I read, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," and called his attention to the fact that this utterance of the apostle justifies us in believing in a present pardon. I then turned to Romans v. 1 and again read, "Being, therefore, justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and once more I called his attention to the statement that we *are* justified, and not that we possibly may be at some future time.

After this explanation the man seemed to gain a new vision. At last he said, "Why did not some one tell me all this before; I have been hoping for

pardon some time in the future and lo ! the gift of pardon is a present gift. This is good tidings for me." See again the plus if it.

At an inquiry meeting during a revival season a young man was assigned to me for conversation. He seemed a most attractive young fellow. After he had talked a little while he said to me, "My Sunday-school superintendent gave me this card on condition that I write my name in the vacant space, which I did. I never would have done it if I had known the trouble that it would give me, for I have had no peace since I put my name there."

On that he passed over the card to me, on which was printed in large type John iii. 16 with the blank space for the word "Whosoever" and the word "Believeth" changed into "Believing." In the blank space the young man had written his name. On reading that I said to him, "My friend, God was hard after you when He inspired your superintendent to give you this card, and the Holy Spirit is even now urging you to accept absolutely the truth of that card."

We then knelt down and prayed. All of a sudden during his prayer there was an abrupt change from petition to praise. He then arose from his knees, his face radiant with the new-found hope, and saying, "I must find my mother and tell her ; she is in the building here somewhere," he hurried away.

Now ask yourself the question, "What did the old man and the young man know about the Bible

as literature?" Simply nothing. But they knew it as the power of God, and was not that the plus of it ?

Once more. When we stand by the grave of one who has died in the Lord and look down on that coffin so soon to be hidden from our sight, it is not as any form of literature whatever that we recall certain words that come to us, "I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." That is God's message to us. It is not prophecy, not poetry, not anything but a divine message God gives to heal bruised hearts.

When the believer lies on his last couch and knows his feet are slipping over the brink of the river it is not as antiphonal poetry that he turns to the Twenty-third Psalm, but as to divinely inspired words, and with dying utterance he sings, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

See, then, the plus of it. Praise be to His name, we may enter into the understanding of this spiritual richness. All the rest of it is grand and we commend it to your careful study, but over and above everything else, never forget that the Word of God is truly the power of God unto salvation to all who believe.

II

THE TWO GREAT BIBLE DRAMAS

THERE are various ways of studying God's Word. One is the microscopic way ; this consists in taking a single text and examining it elaborately. There is, on the other hand, the telescopic way ; that consists in taking large sweeps of the history of Bible times, swift reviews of Biblical biographies, large bird's-eye views of God's dealing with the children of men. The way I have adopted for this course of lectures, as far as the Book is concerned, is the latter, thus taking wide sweeps of the divinely inspired history.

We shall understand better God's dealing with mankind if we understand the progress of the history, if we realize how God perfects that which was originally imperfect, and broadens out and develops that which was originally narrow and circumscribed.

The title of this chapter leads me to put in a caveat, lest any one perchance should think that I regard either the New Testament or the Old Testament as in any sense fictitious, or imaginary. I do not. The reason I put these two books before you to-night as two dramas is merely for the sake of picturesqueness. Now it is an old thought that

this world is a stage, and that all living creatures are actors in this changeful drama of human history. Taking this idea, therefore, I find that the Old Testament is really one vast drama, as is also the New Testament.

As dramas are usually divided into five acts, so, simply for the sake of clearness, I shall divide these two dramas into five acts, giving each drama, however, a prelude. My divisions into five acts in each case may not meet your approval. I have no "Thus saith the Lord" for the divisions; they are the clearest I can make. If, however, you can improve on them, no one will be more charmed than the writer. At all events, they will serve as guiding posts, so that as you pursue the subject further (as I hope you will), you may be either guided thereby, or strike out clearer outlines more fitting to the capacity of those to whom you minister.

Beginning with the Old Testament drama, we have the grand prelude of the Creation. "In the beginning God created." That is more satisfactory to us than "In the beginning matter," or, "In the beginning force," or, "In the beginning the unknowable." Those are human statements. The Biblical statement is, "In the beginning God created." This satisfies the human heart. Then follows the marvellously condensed statement of God's creative activity, closing up with the introduction of man. All that is the prelude, for as yet there have been on earth no human actors. It is

worth our while to remember that while at various stages in this majestic prelude the record says, "And God saw that it was good," only when man arrives is the record changed, now reading, "And God saw that it was very good." Sun, moon, stars, plants, animals, good—the climax, man, in His own image, very good.

Old Testament Drama, Act I. From Adam to Noah.

Here we have man's first probation and failure. A command was issued, a command was broken. Union at first existing between God and man, then shattered, and a great chasm cleft by sin between a Holy God on one side and sinful man on the other.

This first act of the Old Testament drama, which is very briefly recorded, ends in disaster. God looks down from Heaven to see if there is any who does good, and finds none who does good, no, not one. They have all gone astray, every man after the imagining of his own heart; and the result is that the first act of the Old Testament drama is signalized by the wiping out of all of the sons of men saving only one godly family, preserved by divine grace.

Act II, from Noah to Abraham. A Second Probation.

The first probation was disastrous. God begins again, this time with a godly family, and strives by promises and by gracious long-suffering to woo

men to Himself personally. In this second act there is a very high civilization developed; men build cities, become musicians and poets, become artists; mankind becomes strong and puffed up in its own conceit. The result is that men said, "Come, let us build and make for ourselves a name lest we be scattered"; and God says, "Go to, let us confound," and breaks up all of those plans of men and scatters them over the face of the earth.

In these two acts we have God dealing with all mankind without distinction of family, or race. These two acts are very briefly recorded. They occupy at least two thousand years (probably more), but the whole story is compacted in eleven chapters as over against all the rest of the Bible which covers only another two thousand years. That is to say, two thousand years of history (at the inside) in eleven chapters, and the balance of history up to A. D. 90 or 100 in all the rest of the Bible put together. That shows, to my mind, that in the divine thought those two acts were merely preliminary to other acts which we shall now consider. This brings us to

Act III, Old Testament Drama. From Abraham to Kings.

Now God changes His plan in dealing with the sons of men. Now He calls out from all that wrack and ruin of idolatrous environment one family. With that one family He establishes a special covenant; to that one family He gives a special prom-

ise. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." God accepts one family with whom and with whose descendants He establishes peculiar relations and gives them a peculiar promise. The rest of mankind is not abandoned. Any man among the Gentiles may find God if he seeks after Him, as did Melchisedek, as did in some lesser sense Balaam. But my point is that in Act III of the Old Testament drama there is a change of plan, which change of plan has lasted down to the present day. From then on well-nigh all revelation, all prophetic utterance, is confined to the chosen people.

This Act III occupies a large space in the divinely inspired record, for here we find the kernel and heart of much that is developed later on in the fulfillment of the divine purpose. Here in this period, for example, we find under Moses a legislation which the late Attorney-General Brewster, of Pennsylvania, declared to me is the basis of all of our modern civilization and all of our modern legislation. Here in this act you have a typology, which, in connection with the law, was the schoolmaster to bring Israel down the centuries, until all types were fulfilled in Jesus the great Antitype. Here you have high priest, sacrifice, altar. And it is interesting to see what evolution there is in the history as developed from these germs. Abraham's family encampment had Abraham for High Priest, a family high priest; it had an altar, a family altar; it had a sacrifice, a family sacrifice. See later on how that develops. When Israel marches

out of Egypt we have now not a family camp, but a national camp; we have not a family altar, but a national altar; we now have not a family high priest, but a national high priest, Aaron and his descendants; we have not a family sacrifice, but a national sacrifice by Israel on the day of atonement—surely an evolution, surely a development.

Later on, when Israel comes into the Promised Land, while the national high priest remains the same, while the national sacrifice remains the same, we have in place of the national encampment a national city, Jerusalem, and we have in the place of the simple national tabernacle the magnificent national temple,—again a further development. Now, as we look down to the last act of the New Testament, we find a further marvellous development. Jerusalem on earth develops into the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven. The national high priest develops into Jesus the international high priest, a high priest for Gentile and Jew; the national sacrifice develops into an international sacrifice, the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world; the national temple passes away, for in that world there is no temple, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb being the temple thereof. So from Abraham and the family we pass to the national and the international, from the earthly into the heavenly, from the temporal into the eternal.

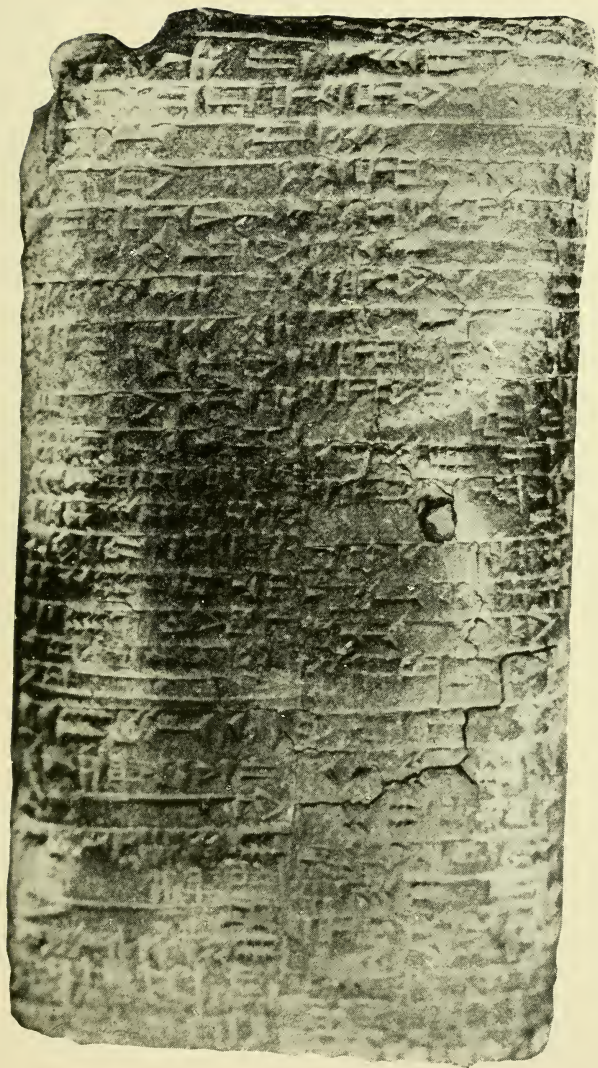
In this third act of the Old Testament, you see a people sent down from the Land of Promise into

bondage in Egypt, there welded in the fires of affliction into a national solidarity that has not been broken, for lo these four thousand years ; for there is no simon-pure blood to-day that can be compared to the blood of Israel. Welded, I say, into a national solidarity that has not been, that never will be, broken.

You see in this third act a nation bodily transplanted from the land of bondage into the land of liberty ; the promise to Abraham fulfilled, that to his seed shall that land be given.

In this third act you see monotheism held to with a tenacity not perfect, but wonderful, amidst the surrounding polytheism ; for whether in the land before Abraham's descendants went to Egypt, or while they were in Egypt, or when they returned to the land, always their environment was idolatrous. The only light shining, setting forth the true God, shone in Israel ; and the call, " Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God," rang through those centuries, not perfectly heeded, but always heard. Here also the two commands, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," rang down from age to age.

So you see that the third act in the Old Testament drama is one of great importance. This act was one that was played in the midst of wonderful civilizations. When I was a younger man, lecturing on Abraham, I was asked the question, " Could



Photograph of Clay Tablet written 200 years before Abraham left Ur of Chaldees.
See page 37.

Abraham read and write?" and my answer then was that I could not say. That would not be my answer to-day. My answer to-day would be, "Certainly;" for Abraham came out of a very high civilization. I have in my possession a tablet from Abraham's land, in Abraham's language, but older than Abraham. This tablet came from the Temple of Bel, fifty miles south of Babylon. It contains in Babylonian cuneiform characters an accounting of two treasurers by the name of Nidup and Kipalne for receipts and expenditures for the Temple of Bel for one year—of course not in money, because there was no money then, but in kind; and on the side it says, "Balance on hand" so much, signed Nidup and Kipalne, in the reign of Gimil-Sin. Gimil-Sin reigned 2200 B. C., so this tablet is over four thousand years old. If treasurers gave accountings two hundred years before Abraham lived in Ur of Chaldees, it is impossible that so wealthy a man as Abraham should not be able to read and write. This sets forth a civilization in which a form of accounting was employed that can be read four thousand years after it was written as readily as the day when it was rendered. A tablet like this shows that much of modern hostile Biblical criticism is based on theories and not on facts.

This third act of the Old Testament drama I make terminate with Kings, because between Abraham and Kings God's method of governing His people was theocratic; He governed them by

patriarch, by prophet and by judge. Then Israel swerved aside, saying, "Make us a king to judge us, like all the nations"; and God said to Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them." God recognized a change in His covenant people, they having set Him aside, and having introduced kings after the manner of the heathen nations. If you can find a better period at which to terminate Act III, suit yourselves, only be able to give some reason for it.

Old Testament Drama, Act IV. Kings to Captivity.

In this act after three kings had ruled over the united tribes, the nation splits in two, and we have ten tribes in the north and two tribes in the south. Taking up the history of the ten tribes, Jeroboam for political reasons swerved aside from God's worship and established calf worship. In the northern kingdom from start to finish there was official calf worship, which degenerated under Ahab to the worship of Baal. Jehu worked out some reform; but he did not bring the people back to the worship of Jehovah, but only back to calf worship. So in the northern kingdom there was never a single sovereign who strove to lead the people back to Jehovah worship in accordance with the command of Moses.

It is the custom of some people to say that the Hebrew was naturally monotheistic. I deny it.

History shows that they were naturally polytheistic, frequently swerving aside from monotheism. If God had not called them back by sending them prophets, Israel would have plunged over the precipice to polytheism. From start to finish God's effort with Israel was to make them monotheistic.

The southern kingdom held more literally to the ordinances of God as given to Moses, partly because they had the temple in Jerusalem, and also because they had quite a number of godly kings, such as Hezekiah, Josiah and Joash. Yet even there the tendency to polytheism appeared and reappeared, beginning with Solomon and reaching down to Manasseh who took the ark from the most holy place and substituted an idol in its place.

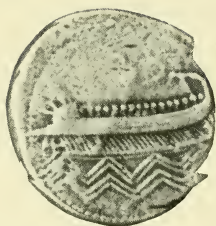
In due time came the march of the Ten Tribes into captivity, and then one hundred and eighty years afterwards the two tribes followed. Oh, often I have wished that they had had moving picture cameras in those days to set these things before us! What a contrast between the march out of Egypt and through the Red Sea and the song of Miriam, when the horse and its rider were lost in the sea—what a contrast I say between that march and the march of Israel out of the land. What a contrast between the march across the River Jordan and up to the walls of Jericho, and the march again across the Jordan with the clank of chains, with lamentation and crying; the inward triumphal march the result of faith and godliness,

the outward despairing march into captivity the result of sin.

Old Testament Drama, Act V. The Captivity and the Return.

A short act this, only about seventy years, but most significant. For when God's people came back to their land from captivity, they came back changed. Up to that point they were always back-sliding to polytheism, but in captivity, under polytheistic rule, God cured His people of polytheism once and for all. He said He would, and He did. When they came back, monotheistic they came, and from that day to this monotheistic has Israel remained in spite of every temptation and unfortunate environment in every land and every clime. I know of no section of Israel from the day of their return from captivity to this day that has abandoned its creed, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God." Marvellous were the dealings, therefore, of our Heavenly Father with His people, so to weld them together in the land of their first captivity into national unity and in the land of their second captivity into loyalty to one God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.

Then the curtain falls, and for four hundred years there is silence. For four centuries no prophet speaks, no miracle is wrought, no supernatural sign is given of God's watchfulness over His chosen. What happened during those four



1. Silver Coin of Artaxerxes III of Persia

Obverse: King in his chariot. Reverse: Persian Galley. (Persian Period)



2. Silver Coin of Alexander the Great

Obverse: Head of Hercules. Reverse: Jupiter Enthroned. (Greek Period)



hundred years? If Nehemiah had come back in A. D. 1 to Jerusalem, he would not have recognized it as the same Jerusalem whose walls he restored; he would have been staggered. When he left, Aramaic was spoken everywhere; now it is Greek. When he left, Jerusalem hearkened to Persia as the centre of authority and power in the far East; now Jerusalem hearkens to Rome in the West. When Nehemiah left there were no synagogues; now the land is full of synagogues.

How quickly you say "four hundred years," but remember what four hundred years may cover. Four hundred years ago, and a little more, the Mohammedans had taken Constantinople and Europe trembled; less than four hundred years ago the Turks were at Vienna, and Europe turned pale; a little more than four hundred years ago America was not discovered. See what four hundred years may mean. In the beginning of this four hundred years of interregnum, the governmental power in Palestine was Persia; Persian rule was mild; if the taxes were paid Persia was satisfied and the Jew could govern himself, under his own high priest. This Persian rule came to a sudden termination in 330 B. C. when Alexander the Great marched with thirty thousand Greek soldiers, and at the battle of Arbela, at one fell blow overthrew the Persian Empire. Then the Greek period began.

With Alexander came Grecian civilization, literature, philosophy and culture.

The Greek period, however, was not a bad one for the Jew, until Antiochus Epiphanes came to the throne. Up to that time they had been allowed to practice their own religion, but when Antiochus came to the throne he made up his mind that Jewish monotheism should come to a close, and he thrust into the Holy of Holies a statue of Jupiter, and sacrificed swine in the temple.

That brings us to the Maccabean revolt and rule. That period runs until A. D. 40, when again the governmental power changed, and from that day on for centuries Palestine was governed from Rome. Thus you have the four periods which fill the four centuries between Malachi and Matthew.

The New Testament drama also has a prelude. On Bethlehem's Plain suddenly the angelic messenger appears, and the angelic chorus comes down. Never before or since has this earth been blessed by an angelic chorus. The words of that chorus we have, but the music is not given. Oh, that we had the music, that we might try to sing it. Why was the music not given? I do not know, but possibly because angelic voices are capable of such wondrous melody as is not vouchsafed to human voices, and though we have the words, if we had the music possibly we could do nothing with it.

This angelic chorus with its glad tidings breaks out over Bethlehem's Plain, and then for thirty years again silence. Then comes



3. Silver Coin of Antiochus Epiphanes
Obverse: Portrait of King. Reverse: Jupiter Enthroned



New Testament Drama, Act I. From John to Jesus.

This act stretches from John to Jesus, that is, from the beginning of John's ministry to the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan. This is the shortest of all the acts, lasting only for six months. During this act John is the main actor. A fiery preacher is this John, coming suddenly out of the wilderness, but seeking no congregation in the cities. He had no problem of morning service or evening service. Wherever he preached men flocked to hear him. There was no forerunner for him in the way of a modern press agent, but the fiery ardour of this preacher rallied throngs around him.

John's message in this brief act was twofold ; first, Repent ; second, Prepare—repent of your past, prepare for your future.

In this connection it is worth our while to notice that this John, coming out of the wilderness, when he sees Jesus gives utterance to two apparently contradictory statements with regard to Him. One of those statements is "Behold the Son of God." That meant power, that meant triumph, that meant victory. The other statement is, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Lamb of God meant sacrifice, humiliation, rejection, death. How could the same person be the Son of God and the Lamb of God ? How could these two be united in one person ? Isaiah taught the same thing, however, when he spoke of Him

who was to be born, "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace"; and yet he also spoke of one who was coming who was to be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . . and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." Wonderful, Counsellor, Father of Eternity; humiliated, rejected, spit upon, killed—how is that possible? Still, these two apparent contradictions meet in Him who came from Nazareth, who was the Son of God and yet the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

How John reached this truth save by direct, divine revelation, I know not. The great trouble with the apostles afterwards until Pentecost was that while they accepted the statement concerning the Son of God, the Wonderful, Counsellor, they rejected that concerning the Man of Sorrows, the one who made His grave with the wicked and the rich in His death.

New Testament Drama, Act II. From Jordan to the Mount of Olives, or from the Baptism to the Ascension.

This is the most marvellous of all these acts in the Bible dramas. It covers only three years and a half, being the second shortest of these acts, yet in this act we see the fulfillment of much Old Testament prophecy. Genesis iii. 15 says that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the



4. Silver Coin of Simon Maccabaeus
(Maccabean Period)



5. Silver Denarius of Tiberius Caesar
(Roman Period.) This is the "Penny" spoken of by Christ

serpent. To Abraham the promise is given, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Jacob on his death-bed, when blessing Judah, says, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the people be." Malachi says, "The Lord will suddenly come to his temple." And here is the fulfillment of all of these prophetic utterances of the Old Testament.

How clearly did these prophets understand what they were uttering? I know not. But this I know, that they saw much more clearly than many in our age think they saw. How much did Abraham understand from the prophecy, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"? I do not know, but Christ said, "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Evidently a much greater understanding was vouchsafed to Abraham than the record in Genesis would lead us to suspect.

In this second act of the New Testament we have the fulfillment of typology. The typology of the temple and the service in the temple was intended to reveal, vaguely, perhaps, but adequately for that time, the great redemption God was to work out for His people. Now here is One who comes, not with the blood of bulls or goats, but with His own blood, to make atonement for the sins of men. Here we have, in this second act of the New Testament drama, Him who is the Great

High Priest—not the family high priest, nor the national high priest, but the international High Priest, an High Priest forever. From Aaron down every high priest died and was buried and his successor took his place. But from now on all high priests are abolished, because there is one High Priest who liveth forever to make intercession for His people. And with this Great High Priest, let me say, all priesthood is forever done away. Men may call themselves priests, but there is no priesthood any longer in the divine economy. There is one High Priest, and all believers are priests unto God. There is a universal priesthood, but for a human high priest there is no longer any need among mankind, for we have One who liveth forever at the right hand of God.

Here, then, in the second act, we have the fulfillment of all typology, all meeting in One Person who came from Nazareth. Now God speaks unto men by His Son; there is no longer any need of even a Moses, for the Son has come. The key to the book of Hebrews is this one word, "better." Moses good, Christ better; Aaron good, Christ better; the blood of bulls and goats good, Christ's blood better; the law good, Christ's law better; the old law, acting as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ good, the fulfillment in Christ, better; the tabernacle, the only building on earth that had a divine architect, good, but that for which the tabernacle stood, the real Holies of Holies in Heaven, better, for there Christ liveth to make

atonement by His precious blood, which is better than the blood of bulls and goats. So, in this marvellous second act, we have a vast advance on all that has gone before.

Here, briefly, let me say that you also have an inbreaking of divine power as never before. It is worth your while to realize that in the book of Genesis there is not one single miracle wrought by the hand of man. Get that right, because some of you may write to me and say, "Do you mean to say that there is no miracle in Genesis?" No, I did not say that; I said that there are no miracles wrought by the hand of man in Genesis. Moses is the first man who wrought any miracle, and he wrought many, and in his day were many wrought directly by divine power. How many? We will consider that in the chapter upon the study of the Bible in spots. But however many they were, they were surpassed beyond computation in those three and one-half years. There were more miracles wrought in the three and a half years of the second act of the New Testament drama than in all the four thousand preceding years put together.

New Testament Drama, Act III. Pentecost to the Turning to the Gentiles.

Pentecost meant power. No Pentecost, no power. In this third act of the New Testament drama there is the establishment of the Jewish and afterwards of the Christian Church. Here you see largely the

fulfillment of the promise of the power of the keys. There is no doubt that Jesus gave to Peter a power He did not give to any other apostle, and what is the use of denying it? The Roman Catholics are right in regard to that statement. He did give Peter the power of the keys, and that is illustrated when Peter opened on the day of Pentecost the door of the church to 3,000 Jewish people. It was Peter again in Cæsarea who swung the door open to the Gentile world, allowing the Gentile world to march into the Kingdom of God without paying any attention to rite and ritual and Mosaic ordinance. Those were two stupendous acts on the part of this man, and explain very largely the power of the keys. Where the Roman Catholic Church makes its gigantic mistake is in maintaining that Peter had the right to pass the keys to his successor, and he to his, and he to his, down to this last man who was elected pope lately. I find no warrant for that in the Bible. Peter opened the door to the Jewish world, he opened the door to the Gentile world, and dying he dropped the keys.

In this act we see the beginning of the triumph of the Gospel through the power of the indwelling Spirit in believers. Here is recorded the descent of the Third Person in the Trinity whose presence is universal. That was a greater blessing to the Church than if Jesus had tarried here in the flesh. You remember He said, "It is expedient for me that I go away." They thought, "It is disastrous if you go away." But He said, "It is expedient,

for when I go the Holy Spirit will come, and he will guide you in all truth." So here you see a new dispensation; the Son leaves but the Holy Spirit takes His place.

New Testament Drama, Act IV. The Times of the Gentiles.

When the Jews refused the truth of this Messiah, the day came when the apostles said, "Seeing you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we turn to the Gentiles." *In that act we now are.* Oh, what a journey from the Old Testament drama Act I to New Testament drama Act IV. Now suddenly we are actors on the stage, because these are the times of the Gentiles. These times will last until the veil drops from the eyes of Israel and they accept Jesus as their Messiah. Christ recognized these times when He said, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Go to Jerusalem and see who treads that city underfoot. The Jew has been trodden upon by the Roman, by the Saracen, and by the Turk, and in his own city the most despised man is the descendant of Abraham. "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them which are sent unto her, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Desolate it has been, and desolate it will be until the times of the

Gentiles be fulfilled. These times, as I have said in my judgment, will last until the veil is lifted from the eyes of Israel ; for, as St. Paul says in Romans, " A hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

In that solemn act we participate, and thus are co-workers with God.

New Testament Drama, Act V. The Lifting of the Veil.

When, we do not know ; how, we do not know. Will it come ? Surely. God has not rejected His people. He is holding them in suspense, so to speak, by reason of their willful blindness. They cried, " We have no king but Cæsar ;" and no kings but Cæsars and Czars and Sultans have they had until to-day. That was their national blindness. But the day is coming when they will see, and Israel will understand that Mary's Son is truly the Son of David, and that in Him meet all the prophecies. Then Israel will look upon Him as its own Messiah, and crown Him Lord of all.

That will be a mighty act. Israel in that act shall turn again towards Palestine, and that land and that Bible, married, so to speak, by God, but divorced by reason of Israel's sin, shall come together again, and God's ancient people shall occupy their ancient land.

I do not believe that that will come at all through any Zionistic movement, because that movement is not saturated with the Messianic spirit.

I believe that when the veil is lifted and Israel begins to turn towards the Land of Promise, it will be through some mysterious impulse, as incomprehensible as the push of the birds in spring from the tropics north, and the push of the birds again in the fall from the north down to the tropics. And so when Israel's eyes are opened, irresistibly from Russia and Germany and France and England and the United States, Israel will be pushed to the land of their fathers. Men will try to explain this push, but there is only one explanation, namely, that Israel has seen, that her eyes have been opened, that now she understands and at last accepts Jesus as her King.

This fifth act of the New Testament drama is going to give boundless blessings to Israel. But not to Israel only ; for, as St. Paul says, if the casting away of Israel brought blessings to the Gentile world, what will the acceptance by Israel of David's Son as the Messiah bring ? The blessings given to Israel will be so great that they will pour over to the Gentile world, and will be to the Gentile world itself as life from the dead. Then will the windows of Heaven be opened, and there will pour out on the world blessings so great that there will not be room to receive them.

See, friends, I have tried to set before you briefly a series of acts in these great dramas of God's dealings with the children of men, and have shown that for the believer always the best is yet to come. The golden day of humanity has not

arrived, it is not in the past, it is in the future; and that golden day will be hastened just in proportion as the believing Church of God lives up to the measure of its privilege in communion with and under the guidance of the Divine Spirit. Then comes that glorious end, when He shall return whose right it is to rule, and when this sin-cursed world that saw Him tread its lanes in discredit, in dejection, in poverty and in pain and woe, shall see Him come again a second time without sin unto salvation and ten thousand angels with Him. That ushers in the end when righteousness reigns and God is honoured and the world unites in singing

“ All hail the power of Jesus' Name,
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.”

III

THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE IN SPOTS

OFTENTIMES at conventions you will hear ministers urging teachers to know the whole Bible. That is a difficult proposition. Very few ministers know the whole Bible. Most ministers preach chiefly from certain favourite books in the Bible and rarely go outside of their line. The only two ministers I have personally known who spread themselves well-nigh over the whole Bible in their sermons were Howard Crosby, of New York City, and Charles Haddon Spurgeon, of London. The fact is that there is crass ignorance of the Bible even among ministers. Indeed, in New York at one time I was occupying the pulpit of a large church to speak on City Missions. The minister asked me what I would like to have read, and I replied, the fourth chapter of Jonah. When he got up to read, he fussed around, and then read a Psalm. I thought that was preliminary, and that Jonah would come next, but Jonah did not arrive. When he sat down he whispered to me: "To tell the truth, I couldn't find it." "Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice," that a minister in New York should not know where Jonah is in the Bible.

Now it is true that the average teacher cannot be familiar with all portions of the Bible, nor is it necessary, because, although the Bible is inspired, not all books in the Bible are equally important. If I must lose Isaiah or Zechariah, there is no question which I shall retain. If I must lose the Acts of the Apostles or the third Epistle of John, there is no question which I shall lose. Not all portions of the Bible, therefore, are equally important.

We must, then, focus our attention and the attention of those to whom we minister in church and Sunday-school upon those spots in the Book that are of superlative importance. Those having been in some sense mastered, we can pass on to other enlightening and charming parts of the Word of God. But until those spots of supreme importance have been thoroughly assimilated, it is foolish to pass on to the less important portions of this divine Word.

The books of the Bible cover Bible times. According to Ussher's Chronology (which is not accurate, we all admit), that means forty-one centuries. I want, for the sake of absolute simplicity, to divide those forty-one centuries chronologically, so as to picture the thing to your minds.

A	J	E	N	A	M	S ^E _E	Z	C

Names :—Adam, Jared, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Zerubabel, Christ.

Here at the beginning of the above diagram we have Adam ; at the close we have Christ. Bisect those four thousand years (and make all the divisions biographical, since the Bible is largely biographical), and you have here, 2,000 years after Adam and 2,000 years before Christ, the Father of the Faithful, Abraham. Bisect each of those periods, and you have the name of a man who was not, for God took him, Enoch, and the name of Solomon. Adam to Enoch, 1,000 years ; Enoch to Abraham, 1,000 ; Abraham to Solomon, 1,000. Now you are beginning to get the chronological points of the compass a little. Bisect once more into periods of 500 years each, and you have next to Adam a name that is not very well known, Jared, which is just given as a landmark. Next after Enoch is the name of the first great navigator, Noah. Next to Abraham is the name of the great lawgiver, Moses ; then the name of the builder of the first temple, Solomon ; then Elijah and Elisha ; then that of the builder of the second temple, Zerubbabel. Adam to Jared, 500 ; Jared to Enoch, 500 ; Enoch to Noah, 500 ; Noah to Abraham, 500 ; Abraham to Moses, 500 ; Moses to Solomon, 500 ; Solomon to Zerubbabel, 500, Zerubbabel to Christ, 500.

The advantage of such a diagram as this to you is that it clarifies Bible chronology and enables you to locate the periods of Scripture you are studying. For example: What are you reading? Well, you are reading Samuel. Very well, then it must be

between Moses and Solomon. What is the study? Nehemiah. Then you are evidently somewhere after Zerubbabel and before Christ.

Now, when we come to the study of Scripture covering these Bible times, there are some things we notice at once. One is that this history is written not like any other history that has ever been put on paper. We notice that there are certain points in the history that are emphasized, where the narrative amplifies, and there are certain other parts where the narrative contracts, and this in a very surprising way. Eleven chapters in Genesis cover, according to Ussher's Chronology, 2,000 years, or one-half the period covered by all Bible times. This is rather surprising. Then you have thirty-nine chapters in Genesis covering 437 years. Why? There must be some reason. Take Exodus; the first chapter covers a minimum of 215 years; chapter two covers eighty years of Moses' life: forty years in court, forty years in the Wilderness. Then the rest of the Pentateuch, or 136 chapters, cover only forty years. Why? There is some reason for that. This is not a history written in a haphazard way; these writers were definitely guided; besides which, they had common sense. There must be, therefore, some underlying cause for the leaping over of 2,000 years so swiftly and for the dwelling on forty years at such great length.

Take the New Testament: four chapters are given to thirty years of Christ's life, two in Matthew and two in Luke. Then eighty-five chapters in the Gos-

pels are given to three and a half years, and of those eighty-five chapters twenty-seven chapters are given to eight days. That is staggering. What did these four Evangelists mean? There must be some reason for this singular division of the historical parts of the Word.

Again, take into consideration one more fact, which is very patent in the whole of the Word. That fact is this: the miraculous in the Old and in the New Testament is very unevenly divided, even as is the narrative unevenly amplified. There are those who think that Bible times are as full of miracles as a pincushion is full of pins. That is not so. There are times in the Bible when miracles are multiplied; there are other times in the Bible when there are no miracles. You will look in vain in Ezra's and Nehemiah's times for miracles. In Genesis you will look in vain for one miracle *wrought by the hand of man*. You will find in all of Genesis not as much as one miracle a century. This is rather surprising. There are other times, however, when miracles are poured out in a wondrous profusion.

Now, if my study has led me aright, I think it will prove true that wherever in the Bible the narrative amplifies, and at the same time miracles multiply, *there you have an indication that the Holy Spirit is emphasizing that time and the teaching contained in that portion of the Word*. Let us look at it and see.

We have seen the condensation in the book of

Genesis where eleven chapters cover 2,000 years. In that period there is far from one miracle a century. When, however, we come to the Patriarchal Period where, as we see, the whole balance of Genesis, thirty-nine chapters, covers the lives of four men, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, all of a sudden miracles begin to multiply. Heaven and earth begin to have frequent communication. There are more miracles in the Patriarchal Period than in all the previous record put together, and a greater amplification of the narrative. That would seem to indicate that the Patriarchal Period is one that we ought to know, one of the spots where we are to sink our wells deep to get living water. That, I believe, is so, because God now was founding the covenant people. In the Patriarchal Period God was beginning the consolidation of that nation through whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

Where does the narrative amplify again? In the Mosaic Period. Where do the miracles multiply again? In the same period. (During the whole captivity in Egypt there is no record of any miracle until Moses comes.) Thus in the Mosaic Period suddenly the miracles multiply, while the narrative amplifies very greatly.

How many miracles were there in the forty years of the Mosaic Period? I do not know. But during all of the time they were wandering in the desert, there were six miracles a week, for every day the manna fell afresh except on the Sabbath. Multiply

forty by three hundred and fifteen and you will begin to see how the miracles multiply.

Here, then, our two signs coincide—broader narrative, more miracles. Was that an important period? Surely, because during that period God was transplanting a nation, was issuing a legislation, was giving a typology. All of that was packed into the Mosaic Period, and therefore we, as teachers, ought to be well acquainted with the Mosaic Period and ought to make our classes thoroughly versed in the annals of Mosaic times, which, after all, were only forty years.

The narrative amplifies again, and at the same time the miracles multiply, when we come down to the period of the two great prophets of the northern kingdom, namely: Elijah and Elisha. What was there very important in this period? This, that then God was trying His utmost to win back the ten tribes to loyalty to Jehovah, and was sending them two of the greatest prophets that He might win them back to allegiance to the God of their fathers. This effort was a failure, because man would not; but Jehovah did His best and man's free will wrecked Jehovah's plan.

After that there is very little amplification of narrative and multiplication of miracles simultaneously until you come down to the Messianic Period. Then, after four centuries of silence, all of a sudden the narrative amplifies as never before. Four books are given now practically to three and one-half years of history. In the Mosaic Period four books were

given to forty years of history ; but here we have only three and one-half years covered by four books. Here, also, we find the other sign, marking the importance of this period, namely : the unprecedented multiplication of the miraculous. Now, as never before, Heaven descends to earth and divine power breaks in, not contravening any laws of nature, but using all God's laws in nature, which are multitudinous, to subserve a divine purpose. And this is what one would naturally expect. If Moses, merely human as he was, was given this divine power of miraculous activity, what shall we expect when He comes who is superhuman? If sitting down to a piano I undertake to play a simple psalm tune, and if I announce to you that I am Paderewski, and yet make half a dozen mistakes in a simple melody, you might be too courteous to say that I am a liar, but in your heart you would say, "That man's name is Ananias." When Paderewski sits down to a piano, you expect to hear an artist, and any man who blunders and strikes false notes proves himself not to be Paderewski. Whatever Moses may do, Christ is better and greater, and we expect a greater outburst of the superhuman, of the Divine, and that we find in the life of this One who was announced by the angels and born of the Virgin Mary.

Now in the Messianic Period miracles multiply and the narrative amplifies at the same time in unprecedented measure. How many miracles were there in those three and one-half years? There is no counting. There were, in my judgment, single

days when more miracles were wrought by Christ than in any one year, in any one ten years, of Bible history preceding that time. For there were days when they brought to Him all the sick in the vicinity and the record is that He healed them all. Imagine that Sabbath day in Capernaum, which has been so often brilliantly set forth by commentators. In the morning of that day there was a demoniac in the synagogue and the demon was exorcised. In the afternoon, Peter's wife's mother lay sick of a high fever, and was healed perfectly. And at even when the sun did set they brought to Him all in Capernaum that were sick, and they gathered in front of Peter's house. Oh, for a moving picture camera; oh, for some vivid setting forth of that wondrous scene in the courtyard outside of Peter's house. See the weary, woesbegone multitude waiting; the door opens and He appears and stands and looks at them. Every eye is fastened on Him, and many hands are lifted in mute appeal. What a sea of woe and want and misery and despair it is! Passing down through that crowd, He takes a child from its mother's arms, she, perhaps, a widow. He lays His hand on the child. Oh, look at the mother's face! the child is healed, and the mother takes the child back, as well as ever. He touches the eyes of a blind man and he sees. And so He goes down into that crowd, speaking and touching. Before Him is a sea of woe, behind Him a scene of triumph and rejoicing, until He gets to the end of that crowd, and there is not one person who says, "Oh, my head; oh, my

head," nor one woman who looks at her child and says, "See my poor child." Why, there were doubtless many days in the life of the Master when miracles multiplied more than in years before. It is perfectly amazing.

Bear in mind that these healings were complete and instantaneous, for in only one case is there a record of a person who was diseased who had to be touched a second time. Once He touched a blind man and he looked up and said, "I see men as trees walking," and then it required a second touch and he saw all things clearly. Why was the second touch needed that time? I cannot tell. Possibly because of the man's lack of faith.

Remember, no healed person ever said, "Thank you, I feel better; I will come to-morrow and maybe you can touch me again." This moment he was deathly sick; the next moment boundingly well. That is the difference between modern healing called faith healing and the Christian Science healing of our day, and Christ's healing. There was no disease He could not heal instantly, and all of this healing was without money and without price.

He healed the incurables. Ten lepers, incurable, cried, "Have mercy upon us," and He sends them away saying, "Go show yourselves to the priests." Not one of them was cleansed when he started, but at some point on the road, I know not where, some one said, "Why, the spot is gone"—"Why, your face is clean." What amazement as they looked

at each other and saw complete renovation ! Nine of them rushed off and have never been heard of since. Only one of them came back to praise Him. And that is one of the bitter things of the Master's experience, for with infinite sadness He says, " Were there not ten that were cleansed ? Where, then, are the nine ? These are not found to give glory to God save this stranger."

He healed the demoniac. In our day there is a large school of those, many professing to be orthodox, who deny demoniac possession, and therefore deny demoniac healing. I am one of those who believe in both, and I shall now give you briefly the reasons which make me believe in the genuineness of demoniac possession in Christ's day and the truthfulness of the record as it stands in the four Gospels.

Those who deny demoniac possession say that the difficulty with the patient was catalepsy, or epilepsy, or some form of hysteria. Some few say that it was a form of insanity. To those I reply that the evangelists always make clear the distinction between all manner of disease and those who were possessed of devils, and, in one case, between all manner of disease and the lunatic. Mark this, however, that every sick person in Christ's day was supremely anxious to be healed, so that they trod one upon another and people were knocked down in the effort to get to the healer. In one case they broke open the roof, you remember, to get a man down to Him. *But not one single demoniac ever wanted*

to be healed ; every one resisted, excepting possibly the boy whose father brought him, and of him it is not said that he wanted to be healed, nor is it said that he resisted. But the uniform cry was, "Let us alone ; what have we to do with thee ; art thou come to torment us before the time ?" That is not the cry you would expect from the epileptic, or the cataleptic, or the hysterical person. There is something peculiar about these demoniac cases as the record is given to us.

In the next place, not one single person healed, as far as the record goes, ever recognized Jesus Christ as the Son of God. But there is not any demoniac whose record is given at all in full who did not recognize Christ as the Son of God. The Gadarene said, "I know who thou art, the Son of God ; art thou come hither to torment us before the time ?" That is most striking ; that does away with any explanation given that these were epileptic or cataleptic persons, or even insane persons. It chimes directly with the Scripture record. In one case it says, "He cast out many devils and he suffered them not to speak *for they knew him.*" If it was real demoniac possession, there was good reason why they should know Him, because, "He came that he might destroy the works of the devil," and that is why they cried out, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time ?" It all hangs together if you accept the record ; it breaks in pieces if you try to explain the record away.

Furthermore, Christ Himself never handled any

form of *disease* as though it were demoniac possession. He never said to any fever-stricken patient, "Come out of him, thou spirit"; but to demoniacs He said, "Come out." The father said of his boy, "He is a lunatic." Christ never endorsed that, but He spoke to the evil spirit in the boy and cast him out. This is an indication that this claim of demoniac possession is based on absolute facts which cannot be explained away without tearing the narrative to tatters.

This sublime, miraculous power of the Master was so overwhelming that even His bitterest enemies never denied it. They never said that He had not power over all manner of malady. What they did say was, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." Instead of saying that the miracles were not genuine, they said, "Genuine they are, but wrought by the devil's power." That is when He spoke His warning about the unpardonable sin of ascribing to the Holy Spirit a devilish influence.

I have sometimes wondered how we could possibly illustrate this superfluity of healing power in the Master. Of course, we at once say, "He was Divine as well as human, and therefore divine works showed themselves forth in Him." I like sometimes, however, if I can, to illustrate, so that common people may be helped, this superfluity of power possessed by Christ. It was so great that it flowed sometimes when He touched a person, while at other times He did not touch the patient, but

simply spoke to him ; sometimes He did not even see the patient, as in the case of the ruler's son in Capernaum, or as in the case of the Syrophenician woman whose daughter He never saw. His ways of working were various, because His superfluity of power was overwhelming. Sometimes I have thought this illustration might help to make us understand His wonderful miracle-working power.

Some years ago a physician in New York, who is making use largely of electricity along therapeutic lines, knowing I was interested in scientific things, said, "Come up to my office and I will show you some queer things." Up I went. He set me down in an insulated chair, and then he turned three hundred thousand volts of static electricity through my body. The moment that current was turned on I knew that I was surcharged with power. He then closed the shutters, took an electric bulb and put it in my hands. Immediately the room was illuminated through the power streaming through me and changing itself into light. There was a machine standing in the corner of the room ; he gave me a chain attached to the machine ; the moment I held the chain the machine began to run furiously through the power streaming through me. He hung over my head a crown of metal hung by a chain. Instantly I felt as if ice-water were being poured over my head, which was the result of the electric current streaming out. He said to me, "I can stop any pain whatsoever instantly, but I cannot keep it stopped." He said,

“When these three hundred thousand volts go through a man, toothache, headache, neuralgia, neuritis will stop instantly ; but when the power is withdrawn, they return.”

I have sometimes thought that this might illustrate the superabundant power of the Master. When He touched, the power leaped. He knew it, and they knew it. One time in the crowd, you remember, a woman got behind Him, bowed with the spirit of her infirmity, and touched the hem of His garment. Instantly she knew something had happened, and He knew that something had happened, though He did not see her. When that physician came near to me, as near as that (indicating), with his finger, a spark flew from me to him, and I knew that it had flown though I could not see it, and he knew it had come to him though his eyes were shut. So with Jesus ; when I say a spark—do not misunderstand—when whatever it was leaped from Him to the woman, instantly He knew it and said, “Who touched me ?” A poor disciple said, in his ignorance, “The multitude thronged thee, and saith thou ‘Who touched me ?’” But there was crowding and crowding. When there was no disease, there was no spark ; when disease was present, a spark flew.

So, then, our point is this : that in the study of the Word for ourselves, and in the leading of others into the study of the Word, we must go after those important points where the divine emphasis has been placed, where great revelations have been

made, where startling truths have been revealed, and where power unseen breaks in on the scene and the Divine manifests itself incontrovertibly in the presence of the human. Then, having done that, we can lead our scholars further on.

Doubtless these four periods, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, that of the two prophets of the northern kingdom, and the Messianic, are the most important. Those are the places where we can lead our flocks, where they can feed on nourishment beneficial to them. Thus, as the years go by in our ministry, our people shall know the Word and always shall hark back to the law and the testimony.

Briefly, one thing more. You remember what I said about these twenty-seven chapters in the Gospels dealing with only eight days. Why that enormous amplification there? Because those eight days from Palm Sunday to Resurrection Sunday deal with the very heart of the Gospels. There is where the Son of God makes atonement for the sins of the world. There is where He Himself bears our sins in His own body up to the tree. There is where Isaiah fifty-three is fulfilled, and there is where the dead, sinful world is ransomed, and He who is lifted up begins to draw all men unto Him. Therefore, that being the supremely crucial period of all, we have twenty-seven chapters to elaborate the experiences of eight days.

How about miracles during that period? During that period there was the one super-miracle. It

was a great thing when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he having been dead four days. Have you ever thought what a disaster it would have been if, standing at the open door and looking into the dark sepulchre, Jesus had called, "Lazarus, come forth," and there had come forth from the sepulchre only an echo? We would have said, "Much power He had, but here He is overmastered." But no echo came out of the sepulchre, but Lazarus himself. That however was a small miracle compared to the resurrection of Christ. All of these resurrections—resuscitations we should call them—were temporary. Lazarus died twice, the widow of Nain's son died twice, the ruler's son died twice; but when Christ arose from the dead, He arose to die no more. The first and only real resurrection was of Him who lay in Joseph's tomb, and He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. So that the climax of the Gospel is found in these chapters, and the climax of the miraculous is found on Easter morning when He arises from the dead, now to die no more.

IV

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

THE literature of the Bible is wonderful. When I say Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Demosthenes, Herodotus, I have given you a roster of great names along the line of Greek literature. When I say Virgil, Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, I have added to the catalogue of great names, this time from Rome. Yet all of these taken together, as helping in the spiritual uplift of man's soul, are not to be reckoned in the same category with Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul and Peter.

See the debt of gratitude we owe to the Jew for this wonderful literature, to which, with the exception of the beloved physician, not one single Gentile contributed one word. Blessed be St. Luke that he did contribute in so rich a measure two books, the Gospel according to St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Never shall we cease to praise God for the privilege granted to that man to contribute so richly to the New Testament. When we reach the blessed land of rest we may well all greet the beloved physician and say to him, "St. Luke, we thank you for what you added to the New Testament."

The Acts of the Apostles is the most important single book in the New Testament, because if you lose one of the Gospels you have three left; if you lose one or two of the Epistles you have others left. But if the Acts were lost there is nothing to take its place. The Gospels would close with the ascension. The next thing you would read would be a letter by a man calling himself Paul to a certain Church in Thessalonica, and you would say, "Who was Paul and how did he come to be an apostle and how did the Church in Thessalonica start?" We should be utterly in the dark if it had not been for the beloved physician supplementing the life of Jesus by the life, activity and success of the apostles.

In dealing with this book by St. Luke, I want to dwell on six pivotal events which it records. If we thoroughly master these we shall have the whole book of Acts at our fingers' ends. In calling attention to these six pivotal events I shall omit entirely the ascension, because that is found in the Gospels also. I shall touch on those pivotal events which are found only in the Acts.

First Pivotal Event: Pentecost—which spells spiritual power. Consider briefly the situation of the eleven. Their Master has departed from them. He has given them His parting injunction to be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Who are these eleven who are to take up the work of the divine Son of God with any pos-

sible hope of success? Four of them were fishermen with not even a high-school education. One of them was the tax-gatherer. One was a zealot, and others were plain men in the ordinary walks of life. While their Master was with them they had made many mistakes. They with quarrelling voices at the Passover contended among themselves as to which should be the greatest. Yet now He is leaving them clothed with the responsibility for the spread of the Gospel which He has come to proclaim upon earth.

Bear in mind, they were to bring the Gospel first to the Jews. But the Jews had rejected their Master and said, "We will not have this man to rule over us." The Jew had already set his face against the Nazarene, and yet here are these unlettered men bidden to present to the Jews a Gospel already disparaged. What was their chance of success?

They were to go to the Greeks as well. The Greeks were far above the rest of the world in philosophy because they numbered great philosophers among their ranks, and how were these uneducated men to teach them? To the cultured Greeks it must have seemed like a huge joke.

These men were to go to the Roman world. If the Greek world was noted for its culture, the Roman world was noted for its power. The Roman world was given over to idolatry, and these men were to undertake the organization of Christianity in the Roman world. What power had they adequate to their task?

See the trinity of difficulties—an antagonistic Jew, a sophisticated Greek, an idolatrous Roman. What are their chances of success? Humanly speaking, they had none. If the Master had failed, how could they succeed? Nevertheless, He says to them, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” That word power is from the Greek word “dunamis,” from which we get our word dynamite. That is to say, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with dynamite from on high.” Then it was that they tarried until Pentecost, and when Pentecost came the promise given of power was fulfilled. So overwhelming was that power in breaking down the hard hearts of opposition that the Apostle Peter gained and baptized in one day more disciples than the Master had gained in three and a half years of His ministry, for apparently about five hundred followers were all Christ could count on after His resurrection. Yet here the Apostle Peter, having dynamite, received approximately three thousand into the Church in one day.

No Pentecost, no power; no power, no spread of the Gospel; no spread of the Gospel, Christ's mission ruined. You see then how tremendous was the importance of that first step, that central pivotal event around which all that followed revolved.

Second Pivotal Event: Persecution. Strange that that should be a pivotal event in the spread of the Gospel, but so it was. The commission to the apostles had been to begin at Jerusalem. They

had begun at Jerusalem, but seemed to refuse to go beyond it. Oh, but the Church was having a splendid time in Jerusalem! First three thousand, then two thousand more were converted and the Church was having favour with the people, and enjoying itself in its spiritual privilege to the height. But they had been told to *begin* at Jerusalem, then to go to Judea, then Samaria, and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. So in order to make them obey Him, God allowed the Church to be stirred up by persecution and scattered abroad. When the persecution that arose about Stephen burst upon the young Church in Jerusalem there were five thousand believers in the city; soon there was not one left, excepting only the eleven. Scattered, driven out from home, friends, business, the young Church instantly had to flee.

But mark you, God caused the wrath of men to praise Him and restrained the remainder, for we read that these believers scattered abroad everywhere went not as they might have gone, holding their peace, not saying, "We are driven out because we have testified, and therefore now we will be silent." Nay; the record is this, that they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. So that from the blaze of one spiritual conflagration in Jerusalem there were a hundred fires started all over the land and the cross of Christ was preached to the world at large wherever these persecuted followers fled. Thus that persecution was a benediction.

I have sometimes thought that if persecution should fall on the Church here in America it might be a benediction. We are too safe and protected, too self-satisfied, too much wrapped up in our comfortable and luxurious churches and cathedrals. If we were driven out, if we had to be the objects of persecution, there might be more true godliness and a more rapid spread of the Gospel on the earth.

Third Pivotal Event: The Change of the Persecutor into the Preacher. That is to say, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. The two most outstanding miracles in the New Testament are, first, the resurrection of Christ, and, second, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

Years ago in England, two men, Lord Lyttleton and Mr. Cecil West, antagonists of Christianity, agreed that each should write a book against Christianity. The one was to take the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and use it to disprove the claims of Christianity, and the other was to take the conversion of Paul to disprove the genuineness of that man's spiritual experience. They separated; each studied his topic; each was illuminated; each wrote a book—Lord Lyttleton on the Evidences of Christianity drawn from the Conversion of Saul, and Cecil West on the Evidences of Christianity from the Resurrection of Christ. I have the former book. The other I have searched the libraries for in vain. It must be out of print.

Yes, this conversion of St. Paul is one of the most outstanding miracles, because while he had been exceedingly violent as persecutor, as a preacher he became equally earnest in championing the cause of Jesus of Nazareth.

Our German friends of the rationalistic school have tried to explain away the story of the conversion of the apostle as not in accordance with fact. One of the explanations they give is almost as miraculous as the miracle itself. They say that the Apostle Paul was a man of sanguine temperament, with the tendency of a flow of blood to the brain; that in great excitement at noonday as under the hot sun he was hastening to Damascus, there to carry out his nefarious schemes, he was actually sunstruck. Then followed brain fever and visions that had no external reality. He saw sights and heard sounds which he thought came from the other world. The result was that he was a changed man and because of this delirium resulting from sunstroke, turned from persecutor to preacher.

Now that would be as great a miracle as the story that St. Luke tells us. I never knew that sunstroke had the power to change a man's character in that way so swiftly. I had a friend in New York who had charge of a chapel that I afterwards took. He had a half a sunstroke, and as a result he never preached again for a year and six months, and yet we are told that this Saul of Tarsus is sunstruck and begins preaching in three

days. If that is the result of sunstroke, I would recommend, Mr. President, that you close your Seminary and stand your students out in the hot July sun until they are all sunstruck. Maybe then some of them could rival Saul as preachers.

This conversion of Saul changed a great antagonistic of the Master into a great protagonist for the Nazarene, and just as he was intense against, so he became intense for Jesus Christ. It must have been to him an immense surprise when he began to preach Jesus Christ as the Son of God to find that they meted out to him exactly the same treatment that he had been meting out to Jesus' followers. As a result, the apostle had to flee from Damascus in an ignominious way.

Then had the Church rest, when this man was changed from antagonist to friend and supporter. Then began that marvellous career which only ended when he laid down his life for his Master in the Imperial City of Rome.

Fourth Pivotal Event: The Breaking Down of the Middle Wall of Partition Between Jew and Gentile. That middle wall of partition was of divine ordination. When God called Abraham and made him the father of the covenant people a wall was raised between Jew and Gentile and no one might be a member of that covenant people unless he was a descendant of Abraham, or unless he came through a gate in that wall called the Gate of the Proselyte.

That wall had stood two thousand years. Peter

knew it was divinely erected. There was not a single apostle living who had the faintest conception that that wall was to come down. All of them thought that if the Gentiles were to be saved, Jews they must become and only then salvation was possible.

To the Apostle Peter was given the breaking down of the middle wall of partition. But to convince him that the command was divine there had to be overwhelming evidence, and that overwhelming evidence was given in a manner entirely unique. It was given by a dual miracle, the like of which I do not find anywhere else in the Bible. A miracle wrought in Cæsarea and another miracle wrought in Joppa and the two miracles fitting into each other like two sections of some dovetailed piece of furniture. Mark—Peter is in Joppa on a housetop, engaged in prayer, with no idea in his mind that the Gentile could come into the Church on an equal basis with the Jew. Meal-time has arrived. Peter is hungry, but while the meal tarries, he falls into a trance. Then the vision. Down comes a sheet and a voice says, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Peter looks into this sheet and sees there four-footed beasts and unclean things, which according to the laws of Moses he was forbidden to eat. Peter therefore replies, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean." Thereupon the voice says, "What God hath cleansed, make thou not common," and up goes the sheet. Peter is bewildered. While he is thinking

it over down comes the sheet again and the voice says, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Now I fancy Peter may have thought, "There will be a change in the contents of that sheet, because I made it clear that I could not eat unclean things." So he opens the sheet again. The same misery, the same uncleanliness! Again perplexed Peter says, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean," and again the voice says, "What God hath cleansed, make thou not common," and up goes the sheet. Peter is more mystified than before, but while he is thinking down comes the sheet the third time and the voice says, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Now he thinks it is certainly changed and again he looks in. The same repulsive contents! So for the third time he says, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean," and the third time the voice says, "What God hath cleansed, make thou not common," and up goes the sheet. Peter is now more perplexed than ever.

A knock at the door down-stairs. "Ho, what is all this?" "Men have come from Cæsarea." "Whom do they want?" "Peter." So Peter goes down and there stand the men sent from Cornelius in Cæsarea who tell Peter of a miraculous visit of an angel to Cornelius announcing to him God's recognition of his alms and prayers and bidding him send to Joppa for Peter. Though Peter still does not understand the meaning of all this, the Spirit says to him, "Go with these men and

doubt not, because I have sent them." So Peter by divine admonition starts out with these men and the next day but one after that they enter into Cæsarea.

Then comes the story equally familiar to us of Peter saying, "You know how it is unlawful for me to go into the house of a Gentile, but God has taught me to call no man common." Then the preaching, then the Pentecostal blessing. Then Peter's eyes are opened and he sees that as on the Jew at first descended the Holy Spirit, so on the Gentile without their entering into covenant relationship with the Jew there has descended the same Divine Spirit. Thus the middle wall of partition, two thousand years old, goes down with a crash and Peter sees that in the Kingdom of God there is no longer Jew or Gentile, but the Divine Spirit of God makes all one in Christ Jesus.

What a blessed privilege to the apostle to help in bringing down that wall, in levelling that dividing line so that henceforth there is no longer Jew or Gentile, but all are one in Christ Jesus. Alas, that, as a fact, men began to build dividing walls again and we have got them to this day. There is the Presbyterian wall, the Methodist wall, the Episcopal wall, and the Lutherans have their wall. The Baptists have not got a wall—they have a ditch with some water in it. The result is that all these walls divide one denomination from another, separate the Saviour's followers and make them stand on one side or the other. Oh, the pity of it !

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Praise be to God, these walls and ditches with water in them are going to come down or be filled up and do you know where that process is going on more rapidly than elsewhere? It is in mission fields, where missionaries are beginning to see that for the pressing needs of China, Japan and Korea the idea of a Presbyterian wall, or Methodist, Episcopal, Baptist, Lutheran wall, is absurd. In the mission field we shall have at last one Church of the living God, trusting in Jesus Christ as Saviour Divine and being sanctified by the Holy Spirit as the Divine Third Person in the Trinity. They have got to come down—these different walls—because they are human structures and not of divine ordination.

Fifth Pivotal Event: The Organizing of Missionary Work by the Church. There had been missionary work by the followers of Christ. But now in Antioch under the great blessing that had come to them through Barnabas and Saul, the Church feels called by the Holy Spirit to organize missionary work. The Holy Ghost saw fit to call upon Barnabas and Saul to undertake this work.

Mark just here that when the Holy Spirit picked out from that prosperous Church in Antioch men who were to be sent abroad it picked out the two best they had—Barnabas and Saul. The Church at Antioch, had it been like some modern Churches, might have made reply, "Oh, Lord, what have you asked? These are our best men. The Church cannot get along without them. Take some of the

others. They are second-rate men. Send them, but let Barnabas and Saul stay here." Modern Churches have acted this way only too often. They preserve their best men at home and if they have some kind of a second fiddle, why he can go to Korea or China or Africa. That is not the way of the Divine Spirit. I believe if the Church at Antioch had held on to Barnabas and Saul it would have shrunk up. It was the sending out of the best that brought back to them a benediction that they could hardly overestimate.

What we need, friends, is that the very best of you shall go to the hardest fields. Good men are needed to work in the slums. No one of you is too good for missionary work in Korea, or in China, or in Japan. The very fact that you are called at home to a big church may be only another reason why you should not accept that call because it marks you as being a man of influence. That very fact might send you to the slums or to dark Africa, or to China, Japan or India. The Holy Spirit wants the Church always to put her best on the altar. When she does that then to the Church will come so great a blessing that the cup of the Church shall run over.

Sixth Pivotal Event: The Crossing of the Gospel from Asia to Europe. The story, of course, is very familiar to us; Paul at Troas, the vision of the man of Macedonia saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," the conclusion of the apostle that that was a divine call, and the swift departure from Asia and the crossing over to Philippi.

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Now there had been several crossings from one continent to another just about in that same locality in days gone by. Xerxes had crossed from Asia to Europe with a million of men that he might conquer Greece, and only this summer I stood by the identical spot where they say his throne was as he watched his fleet combating with the Greeks. Alexander the Great played a return match and as Xerxes went from east to west, Alexander marched from west to east, and at the battle of Arbela the whole Persian Empire was conquered and Alexander advanced almost unopposed to the borders of the Indus River.

Neither of these crossings had wrought any great benefit. Nothing of spiritual value could be found in either of them. Since that there has been another crossing in that same locality, when the Turk crossed over to Europe, but that brought no real benefit to Europe. It rather tended to disturb and damage, and Europe will really be benefited when the Turk is pushed back to that continent from which he came.

Here, however, an army is crossing from Asia to Europe for the conquest of Europe for its King. This army consists of four—Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke. Xerxes' ambition was much more easy to satisfy than Paul's because it is much easier to conquer a nation physically than it is to conquer it spiritually. It would take ten times more effort to conquer a man's soul than to conquer his body.

Xerxes having failed, Paul is now crossing over

with his three fellow workers in order that he might win Europe for the cause of his Master and for Him who is the God and Father of us all. So these four go over invading Europe without sword or shield, without spear or bow.

It is rather significant, is it not, that the first convert won by these men was a woman—Lydia of Thyatira, who was in Philippi at this time. And the second convert was a woman with a spirit of a Python, whom the apostle freed from her bondage. Frankly, that seems to me to illustrate what the Gospel does for women. It does for us men boundless things; it does for woman still more. God planted man in the Garden of Eden and gave woman as his helpmeet and they were to be side by side. When sin came man pushed woman behind him and she has been tramping along behind ever since, excepting only where Christianity has come in. The Mohammedan does not walk side by side with his wife. Would he help his wife on the trolley-car? No, indeed. He would walk on ahead and get on the trolley-car and she might get on if she were quick enough; if not, that was of no concern to him. All over the world when sin is present man has thrust woman behind and down and has kept her there. When Christianity comes it brings woman back to where God placed her originally—side by side with man as his helpmeet.

In modern days it seems as if there were a movement on foot to shove woman ahead of man. She has been behind him, then brought up to his side,

and now there is a movement to put her ahead of him. I am sorry for the advocates of that movement because it is contrary to the nature of things and when you go against nature, nature usually draws back and gives you a blow between your eyes that makes you see stars.

I remember hearing a lecture by Dr. J. G. Holland years ago in which he asked this question, "Has woman any sphere?" and his answer was, "No." Second, "Has man any sphere?" and his answer was, "No." "What then," he asked, "is the situation? It is this: Man has a hemisphere and woman has a hemisphere and if you bring two hemispheres together then you have a sphere." Well said. Man has his duty, privilege, opportunity; woman, her duty, privilege, opportunity. Bring these together and you get something that is divine. When the two are side by side, hand in hand, arm in arm, then we have the ideal relationship.

This army of four had a very singular experience. Within a very few days half of the army was in jail. In jail because they tried to, and succeeded in, delivering a poor woman from the grasp of the men that were making money out of her misfortune. So into prison Paul and Silas go because of their act of mercy to oppressed humanity. And are they defeated? Nay verily. Here is where you see the wonderful triumph of these men over all physical disabilities. I fancy that if you had been a fellow traveller with the Apostle Paul you would have never been dull. There was always something

doing. You might not have been comfortable all the time, but dull, never. You would not have been dull even in the darkness of that prison cell, though if your back had been in the same condition as his you might have been very uncomfortable. Imagine it for a minute. From his neck down to his hips he is all bruised and bleeding, and Silas is in the same condition. Their clothes are put on their bruised backs without any first aid to the injured; not a drop of water; not a mouthful of food; pitch dark.

I fancy I hear Silas saying, "Paul, how are you?" "Getting along very well, thank you." Then do you hear Silas say, "Paul, we always seem to get into trouble when we preach. Don't you think we had better stop?" and then Paul reply, "Yes, I think I will stop"? Oh, no; they begin in the dark to sing a duet of praise to God. These suffering, crushed men praise God for the privilege of suffering in this way. Such men you cannot overthrow; such men you cannot conquer. You may kill, but conquer, never.

I have been in prisons in the small hours of the morning myself, not as a prisoner, but as a visitor. I have heard songs, ribald, filthy. I have heard curses, blasphemous, horrible; but a song of praise to God from men whose backs were in that condition, never. Have you ever stopped to realize what the Apostle Paul's back must have looked like? Eight times that man was whipped; five times with whips and three times with rods. Eight times

he was tied to the post and eight times down to his hips every inch of his back was bleeding. You could not put your finger on Paul's back that you did not touch some scar or blotch. Yet he says this was a light affliction—"this light affliction." "How many times did you say you were whipped, Paul?" "Eight times." "And yet you talk about a light affliction?" Hear his answer. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." That kind of a man you cannot conquer.

This was the kind of an army which, going from Asia to Europe, began that westward march of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that paused not until it struck these Western shores and is now rolling across the Pacific into Japan and China.

V

JOSEPH—PRISONER AND PRIME MINISTER

JOSEPH is presented to us in the Bible as a most beautiful character, one whose study well repays every Christian teacher. To Abraham there are given thirteen chapters in the book of Genesis, and to Joseph thirteen, thus giving more than one-half of the first book of the Bible to the narrative of these two men's lives.

We may find flaws in Abraham's character as well as in Isaac's. Jacob's life is full of mistakes and sins. Moses spoke once unadvisedly with his lips, and Aaron sinned grievously in the matter of the golden calf. Paul had a burst of anger with Barnabas, James and John desired at one time to call down fire from Heaven to burn a whole Samaritan village alive. Peter, like Jacob, was full of faults. But in the whole life of Joseph there is no single fault recorded. This does not mean that he was sinless, but it does mean that the Divine Spirit did not see enough that was variant from the truth in his life to make record of the same. There are few of these Bible characters of whom this can be said. Among these are Joshua and Daniel.

Joseph's life falls into two divisions. First, his humiliation, dealt with in Chapters XXXVII,

XXXIX, and XL, and second, his exaltation, which occupies Chapters XLI to L inclusive.

First, his humiliation. He is introduced to us in the family of Jacob at the age of seventeen as an upright and lovable boy. He was his father's favourite, and this very fact aroused the jealousy and envy of his brothers. (See Genesis xxxvii. 3-4.) Incidentally, we pause to notice that family favouritism never produces good results. In the family, if nowhere else, justice must be held in even balance and every member of the family must be looked upon and loved and cared for as tenderly as every other member. Old Jacob, however, having taken Joseph as his favourite, emphasized this most unwisely in giving him a garment that should distinguish him at once from his brothers and make him the observed of all observers.

This envy by his brothers soon intensified by reason of two dreams which Joseph had, which were prophetic dreams, the one where the sheaves bowed down to his sheaf, and the other where the sun, moon and stars did him reverence, and the result of his telling these dreams, in a kind of boyish though unwise enthusiasm, was that his brethren hated him yet the more.

It was his duty at times to bring a full report of his brethren to their father. This naturally did not in any way modify their feelings, so they laid up their envy and hatred for a convenient season. This season came when the aged Jacob sent his favourite boy to inquire concerning the welfare of

his shepherd brothers. They were at this time in Dothan, and there Joseph finds them. As soon as they see him, they recognize that now, at last, their chance has come. Away from the father's tent and home, alone, they have got him, and now they propose to wreak their vengeance on this innocent boy. Their first plan was to kill him. This was changed, however, through the intervention of Reuben. Then they threw him into a pit from which Reuben planned to rescue him. The valley of Dothan abounds to this day in these limestone pits, and there the purpose of most of them seems to have been to leave the boy to starve. But this plan was changed when certain Midianites, also called Ishmaelites, passed by on their journey to Egypt. Then Jacob's blood, the scheming, money-making blood, told, and Judah said, "What profit is there in our brother's blood? Come, let us sell him to the Midianites." So poor Joseph is pulled up out of the pit and sold to the Midianites for twenty pieces of silver. The brothers pocket the cash and return to their father whom they deceive with acts and words, while they hypocritically rise up to comfort him in his sorrow at the loss of his favourite boy.

In the East things are now largely as they were 3,700 years ago. Well do I remember sitting in that valley of Dothan, which we visited out of respect to the memory of Joseph, and at noon-time taking our lunch just as the brothers did on that historic occasion. While we were talking of Joseph

and his experiences, we heard bells, and across the mouth of the little lateral valley of Dothan, which branches off from the highway between Damascus and Egypt, there passed a caravan, as of old, garbed in the same robes and on the same errand as these men were to whom Joseph was sold. It was fairly startling, and we almost looked around to see where the pit was in which we might find the living Joseph.

Down to Egypt this innocent boy is carried, and there sold into the house of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers. There he tarried for some considerable time, until through the iniquity of Potiphar's own wife he was again ensnared, not in iniquity, but in her toils. When he would not yield to her temptation she instantly maligned him to her husband. The result was that Joseph had to descend one step further in the line of humiliation, and from slave in Potiphar's house he goes as prisoner into the jail of the king.

There he tarried for about four years. There too, as in Potiphar's house, his fidelity and ability were equally marked. As in Potiphar's house all things were put under his charge, so in the prison whatever was done Joseph was the doer of it.

Here we pause for a moment to see the conflict between plans human and plans divine. The human plan of the brothers is to get Joseph out of the way for good and all. The divine plan is through Joseph's instrumentality to make a place for Jacob and his family, where they may abide in time of stress and storm, and where, in Egypt, they may

multiply, and at last in due season be brought back to the land which God promised to Abraham and his seed. These two plans, human and divine, here collide, and most instructive it is whenever we see a collision between human and divine purposes, to see how God will utilize all the human, both the sin and the holiness, and work out the warp and woof of the divine plan with absolute perfection. The brothers thought that they had accomplished their plan, and were ignorant of the fact that God was using the wrath of man to praise Him, and was restraining the remainder.

We see this collision between plans human and plans divine not infrequently in the word of God, and it is helpful to our feeble faith to see how always the divine is victorious, and the human and sinful is pushed to the wall to make way for God's plan to move on to complete success.

It is worth our while here also to mark the steadfastness of Joseph's character in the midst of adversities. All these things came to him, not because of his sin, but because of his righteousness. That is hard to understand and we sometimes are tempted to say, "Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart," for "all these things are against me," and, what profit is there that I should serve Jehovah when this is the outcome of my loyalty? Yet, with all these adversities coming to him because of his steadfastness, Joseph's faith never varied or failed, nor was his disposition in any way soured so that he became vengeful. We see this in

the way in which he treated Potiphar, in the way in which he stood for the right in that man's family. We see it again in the way in which he showed his fidelity in prison and was kind to Egyptian prisoners like the butler and the baker who were placed under his care.

Had Joseph been like some modern men this would have been his argument : " These Egyptians bought me when they had no right to purchase me. Potiphar put me here in prison for doing right and not wrong. Now is my chance, and being in charge in this prison, when Egyptian prisoners come in I will have my revenge on them."

I fancy had Joseph had a disposition like this when the butler and the baker came into the prison he might have seen his chance to retaliate, and to make their lives a burden to them while they were there. This, however, was not in any sense Joseph's feeling, for he was sympathetic with the prisoners, as is proved by the fact that one morning on coming in to see them, he noticed on the faces of the butler and the baker an unusual expression of sadness, and kindly he inquired, " Wherefore are your countenances sad this day ?" Sympathetically he entered into their dreams, and gave them a proper interpretation, and so showed that the milk of human kindness was as sweet as ever with him, in spite of all the adverse circumstances with which he had to contend. Here are Christian graces after the type of the beatitudes, illustrated 1,700 years before the beatitudes were uttered. Here is the

spirit of Christianity exemplified before Christ ever was born, showing that even under the old dispensation grace might foster those virtues which are the true adornment of every child of God.

We do well to call attention to these facts because they stand out most markedly in the times and in the environment in which Joseph found himself. Kindliness, purity, honesty and sympathy were not graces that had been cultivated in those days to any great extent. More was it cruelty, intrigue, revenge and resentment. All the more, then, like a lily growing in a swamp, does this wondrous character of Joseph stand forth as something to be admired, testifying to the grace of God, and the triumphs that He can attain in the working out of perfect human character.

Again it is worth while to note now God uses minute links in the chain of divine providence to work out His great purposes. Was there any connection between the sadness on the faces of the butler and the baker, and the deliverance of Israel from Egypt? Was there any connection between Joseph's sympathetic interest in their dolorous condition and the triumphant exodus of the Israelites? Not to the human eye. But as the story is given to us here we see easily that all these little things were links, welded together by divine supervision and care, making a great chain of divine providence. So that between the sadness of the butler and the baker, and the exodus on that eventful night years later there is close connection.

Darwin, in one of his enchanting lectures, says he noticed that in English villages heartsease would not grow wild, but away from the villages they grew wild in abundance. Looking for the cause for this he found a chain of causes. In English villages dogs abound and run at large. Where dogs run at large cats must stay at home. Where cats stay at home field-mice abound. Where field-mice abound, bumblebees' nests are destroyed. Where bumblebees' nests are destroyed pollen is not carried from flower to flower for fertilization. Therefore, dogs, no heartsease.

This is one of those beautiful hidden chains made up of links, and until you understand the links you cannot understand the result. Take the links here between the sadness of the butler and the baker and the triumphant exodus. No sadness on their countenances, no notice taken by Joseph. No notice taken by Joseph, no interpretation of their dreams. No interpretation of their dreams, no remembrance of Joseph by the butler when he was restored to the king's favour. No remembrance of Joseph by the butler when he was restored to the court, no deliverance of Joseph. No deliverance of Joseph, no preparation for Jacob to come down to Egypt. No preparation for Jacob to come down to Egypt, no exodus.

It is charming to watch the minute links which God makes use of, for doubtless as it was in Joseph's case, so it is in our cases. God is making use daily of links in our experience to weld them

into the great chain of divine providence in our behalf. It well repays the student of Bible history and especially of Bible biography to look for these chains with their multitudinous links and to see how God uses things small as well as things great to work out His divine purpose.

This brings us, second, to Joseph's exaltation. This came with a leap. To-day in prison, to-morrow, second in the kingdom. How this came about we need not recount, for the story is familiar to every Bible reader. There are some who think that the story (because of its very extraordinary nature) is apocryphal, and that no ruler would take a man out of prison and promote him at one leap to be second in the kingdom. We admit that the story is rather extraordinary for us Occidentals, but we do not admit that it is so peculiar for Orientals, for Oriental methods have been and still are at antipodes from those which we adopt.

In my home in Constantinople the Sultan had a private dentist whose name was De la Rue, and his business was to wait on the Sultan when called for. One day the Sultan had a toothache and sent for his dentist. The dentist was off shooting, and the messenger said, "Your Majesty, the dentist cannot be had." "Get me a dentist," demanded the Sultan.

Now there was a dentist near the Galata Tower, whose gilded tooth I have often seen swinging over his office on the street. He pulled teeth for twenty-five cents apiece. The stupid officials knew

of no other dentist than that one, and mounting their horses they rode up to his office and told him their errand. Then they discovered that he had no garments suitable to enter the palace in. So they mounted him on a horse, took him to a ready made clothing store, dressed him appropriately and took him to the palace. He examined into the difficulty, found the offending molar, extracted it, and the Sultan was at rest.

Immediately the Sultan deposed his French dentist, and put this man in his place, created him a Pasha or peer of the realm, gave him a palace in the city and a palace in the country and an annual stipend that made him one of the rich men in the land. To-day in a garret, pulling teeth at twenty-five cents a tooth, to-morrow peer of the realm with two palaces and an annual stipend. Had this dentist had the common sense of Joseph all might have gone well with him, but to carry out the illustration of Oriental manners I must finish the story. The dentist, through great prosperity, lost his head, took a pistol and forced his way into the presence of the Chief Admiral and threatened to shoot him. The Chief Admiral asked, "Who is this man?" They said, "The Sultan yesterday made him a peer." "Oh, did he?" said the Chief Admiral. With that he called for a carriage and drove to the palace, and said, "Your Majesty, this man whom you created Pasha yesterday threatens to shoot me." "Send him to me," says the Sultan. So the new peer is brought before the Sultan, and

like a flash the Sultan takes away his title, his palace in the country, his palace in the city, and his annual stipend and puts him back in his garret.

That is Orientalism, pure and simple, and that will illustrate (if any one thinks that Joseph's story is rather extraordinary) Oriental methods. For the Oriental people there is nothing extraordinary in anything that an absolute sovereign does. In Joseph's case, however, Pharaoh had good ground for his action.

So now we have Joseph riding around Egypt in a chariot, with outrunners who cry, "Bow the knee!" and every man who sees Joseph's chariot coming prostrates himself. Thus God is working out His plan, the malignant plan of the brothers is being thwarted, and God's purposes concerning Israel are moving on to completion with majestic power.

Now we come to fourteen years of extraordinary activity on the part of this Prime Minister. First, the seven years of great plenty. Second, the seven years of great famine. And here I might say that within a few years there has been dug up in Egypt a scroll which is the petition of certain men to the king for a remission of their taxes because of seven years, consecutively, of famine under which they have been suffering, and that scroll dates back to the days of Joseph.

During these years of activity Joseph went "throughout all the land of Egypt." That expression gained a new significance to me when I

visited Egypt, for Egypt is like my hand and arm. The hand with outstretched fingers is like the delta of the Nile, and the arm is the river. As you go up the river from the delta south, for fifteen hundred miles you can see from the deck of your boat every particle of arable land on either side. For the most part the arable land is but a mile wide on either side of the river, sometimes two miles, but at the very widest five miles. Outside of that sand, eternal sand, where even beetles can hardly live. So that Joseph's going throughout all the land of Egypt to gather grain practically meant that he got into his dahabeah, or native boat, and sailed up and down, riding occasionally a mile, or perhaps two miles, or five miles inland, and returning again to his boat, to see that the taxes were properly paid during those years when the ground brought forth by handfuls.

During all this time Joseph had communicated in no way with his father, and that seems to us rather strange. While he was a slave he could not, nor while he was in prison, but when he came to the position of Prime Minister our modern ideas would naturally suggest that he should make some great effort to find out whether his father was alive or no. But there seems to have been no such effort. In explaining this let us bear in mind that communication in those days was not as rapid as in our time. Joseph had no telegraph, and he had no telephone to call his father up, and say, "Hello, is that you, father? Well, this is Joseph. No, you

are mistaken, I am alive. No, I was not killed, they sold me down in Egypt and put me in prison, and now I am next to the throne. Won't you hurry up, father, and come here, because there is plenty of food here?"

The Oriental is ordinarily somewhat phlegmatic and Joseph was very busy during those years of plenty, and I suspect that he felt in his deepest soul, "They will come down sooner or later, and I will see them, and when they come then I will make them understand that God meant all this for good to me and to them as well."

At last the famine pressed hard even in Palestine, and Jacob sent his sons down to Egypt to purchase food. Now comes that interesting series of interviews between Joseph and his brothers, prolonged and repeated as they were. If you read the story in a cursory way you will gain the impression that Joseph was hard in heart to his brethren and harsh in manner. And so he was outwardly, because their hearts were hard, and required to be broken before they could be brought to a proper sense of their cruelty and to a right state of mind. But that Joseph did it with kindly intent is evident by the number of times we see it recorded that he refrained from weeping, or that he went out and wept because he could not restrain himself, and he was not willing to be seen weeping before the time came when he could reveal himself to them as their brother. All his actions were with intent, and wise, because he desired God's

purposes to be carried out in their hearts and lives as well as in his own.

Remembering this we will be better able to interpret these interviews, culminating at last in that magnificent burst of affection when Joseph orders every Egyptian out of the court that the Egyptians may not see him break down in paroxysmal weeping, as one by one he embraces these brothers of his. This is a beautifully tender picture, unsurpassed perhaps anywhere in the Bible excepting in the story of David and Jonathan and of Ruth and Naomi.

The brothers go back to their father after their first interview with Joseph, not knowing yet who he is, and they tell the story to their father, while he, suffering, broken-hearted, refuses to allow Benjamin to go down to Egypt, and says, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away." Poor blind Jacob says, "All these things are against me." Had he had clearer vision he would have said, "All these things are for me." The selling of Joseph, the arrest of Simeon and the request for Benjamin were all parts of God's plan in the woof and warp of divine providence.

Paul had clearer vision when in the eighth chapter of Romans he said, "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good." Not "a few things," not "many things," not "most things," but "all things," says the apostle. Had Jacob had Paul's vision he would have said, "This is God's way, and through this

devious and sometimes dark pathway God is leading out and up and on."

It is significant that poor Jacob's confidence in his boys and their fidelity was so small that when at last they told him, "Joseph is alive," he would not believe one of them. What made him believe was the wagons which Joseph sent to bring the old man down, for the record is, "And when Jacob saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him the spirit of Jacob their father revived." That is a commentary on his sons and their influence with him, and his confidence in them, and that may make us understand again why Joseph put his heel on them for a while until he could bring them to their senses.

Then follows the descent into Egypt in accordance with what God had told Abraham long before, that his seed must go down to Egypt and there they must endure affliction for generations (or centuries) before they should be ripe for transplantation to the land which God gave to Abraham and his seed forever. There in Egypt, first with prosperity and secondly with adversity, God was welding together into wonderful unity that people whose solidarity never is to be broken until the day of their final redemption. Egypt did for Israel what has never been done for any nation on earth, for the people of purest blood this day on the face of the globe are not Gentiles but the Jewish people, and the nation which God scattered, over two thousand years ago, is still one in its national

unity, still one in its religious adhesiveness, and will remain one until the day that God's purpose is wrought out and they accept Christ as David's greater Son, as the Messiah. God's purpose for Israel is not completed yet. When it is completed, there will come not to Israel only but to the Gentile world the fullness of the divine blessing, for as the apostle says, if the casting away of Israel has been a blessing to the Gentile world, what shall their ingathering be unto the same world but life from the dead?

At last the end of life comes to this grand man Joseph, and his abiding faith in God and His promises is shown when he takes an oath of the children of Israel, as told in the last chapter of Genesis, saying, "God shall surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." Embalmed and laid in a mummy case, and that in a sarcophagus, the body of Joseph is the longest unburied body in history, for it remained unburied probably for two centuries or more, a standing witness to his faith in God. For when, in passing, an Israelite child said to its father, "Whose is that sarcophagus?" the answer might well have been, "The sarcophagus of Joseph." "Why is it not laid away in some final resting place?" "Because he took an oath of us, saying God would one day visit us, and we should take his body when we go, and my boy, go you shall, one day."

A wonderful testimony was that uninterred body, therefore, for at least two hundred and fifteen

years, and it is most uplifting to realize that on that night of superlative excitement when Israel gathered itself together to march, they never forgot the body of Joseph. Some committee was put on guard to see that when they started that mummy case in the sarcophagus should not be left behind, and the record is that on that night when they marched they took with them the body of Joseph.

No funeral procession was ever as long as that of this wonderful man, for his funeral procession was forty years long. Throughout all their wanderings in the wilderness they never forgot that mummy case. Whether by day or by night they journeyed it went with them. Whatever might have been left behind that never was. Though the story never relates that it was so, we know it must have been so, because in Joshua xxiv. 32, after they have gotten to the very centre of the land, the record reads that they buried the body of Joseph in Shechem.

So wondrously the man's life begins, continues and closes. So wondrously God's providence elaborates the divine plan, making use of human sin and frailty, making use of man's perverse desires as well as man's fidelity and consecration, and working out that which He said at the beginning He would accomplish that His people should be sojourners in the land of Egypt, and in due time they should be brought out and transplanted into the land flowing with milk and honey.

VI

MOSES—LEADER AND LAWGIVER

FOR a short while after Joseph died things went well with Israel in Egypt. Then there arose a ruler who knew not Joseph. Israel was enslaved and for many scores of years served by the brick kiln. Tyranny increases until finally when bondage is at its most cruel point there comes the deliverer, and this gives rise to the Jewish proverb, "When the tale of bricks is doubled, then comes Moses," which is their way of saying, "When night is darkest morning is nearest," or "Man's extremity is God's opportunity."

Moses was born while the decree was still in force that all male children of the Israelites should be thrown into the river. Here we have, as in the case of Joseph, a clean-cut collision between the divine plan concerning this baby and the human plan. As we said then, so we again say, it is charming to watch the working out of the divine plan and the pushing to the wall of the human plan; to see how God causes the wrath of men to praise Him and the remainder He restrains.

God's plan concerning this baby is "He shall deliver my people." Pharaoh's plan is "He shall go into the river." Mark how in God's plan He makes use of human instrumentality and, in saving the life

of this babe without any miracle whatsoever, overturns Pharaoh's plan, and gives His own plan the right of way. There are in this chain of divine providences delivering the baby many links, some of them inconspicuous, yet all of them necessary for the fulfilling of the divine purpose. Among these links is a woman's wit. Jochebed, Moses' mother, knowing that she cannot conceal her child much longer, puts her wits to work, conceives the plan of the ark of bulrushes, daubed inside and outside with pitch and slime, and entrusts her child to the river in this little ark. Another link is the sister's fidelity. Miriam, thirteen years old, is put to watch that baby boy to see that no harm comes to the child, and to see that when Pharaoh's daughter comes down, she, Miriam, shall intervene at the psychological moment. Had Miriam been unfaithful and run off and played with the girls, Pharaoh's daughter might have come down to the river and found the child and taken it away, and then Moses never would have known his ancestry. Well, the princess came down to the river, and seeing the little ark among the bulrushes, curiosity (another link) is aroused and she sends her maid to see what might be in the ark. There they find a little baby weeping and this brings in the fourth link in the chain of divine providences and that is a baby's tears. The tears of the child touch the heart of the princess and she says, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Were I a poet I would begin my song with

Moses' tears and would make them swell into such a flood as should drown Pharaoh's army before I got through.

So God's plan concerning the saving of this boy succeeds and Pharaoh's plan miscarries, and before the day is ended Moses is back in his mother's arms with the shield of the princess over him to guard him from harm, and actually with wages paid the mother to nurse her own boy who has now become the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter.

It is charming to see these divine plans working out. From the time that Moses' mother entrusted him in the ark to the river, to the time that she got him back into her arms, with wages for his care and with royalty for his protector, how many hours do you think elapsed? Moses' mother was shrewd enough to figure to a nicety the time when the princess would come down, for she would never leave her baby boy to scream and cry uselessly in the river. I make no question that it was within an hour from the time she went out from her house and deposited the ark in the Nile, to the time that the child was brought back and was safe in his mother's arms.

When Moses can no longer be cared for in his home, he goes to Pharaoh's court, and for practically forty years enjoys all the advantages of court life along educational lines. For we read in the New Testament he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and that meant all the wisdom there was in those days, because Egypt was the most

cultured land of that time. Every advantage that could be laid before him or poured into his lap was his and Pharaoh himself is educating this boy to bring down Pharaoh's pride.

The forty years of court life came to an abrupt end. Moses, always patriotic and loyal, found one day an Egyptian shamefully abusing an Israelite. He defended his co-patriot, slew the oppressor and buried him in the sand. But the deed could not be hid, and the day following, Moses learns to his amazement and alarm that the deed is out and he must flee. It would never do even for Pharaoh to stand in defense of Moses, a member of the oppressed race as against an Egyptian. Moses knew that and the result was that he abandoned the land of his birth, and fled to the back side of the desert, even to Mount Horeb.

There begins the second period of this extraordinary man's life, and now, again for forty years, we find him in the wilderness living the life of a shepherd. It was in these years of comparative solitude, I believe, that Moses learned much concerning God and His ways. In silent communion with God he could learn lessons that could not be learned in Memphis or Thebes. And in solitude he could have spiritual experiences that never would come to him amidst a multitude of people. So also Elijah learned much in the wilderness before ever he had his first encounter with Ahab. Paul himself after his conversion went down into Arabia where he tarried for three years and there had such revelations as

prepared him for his future career. John the Baptist too came out of the wilderness to deliver his messages, "Repent, prepare!" And our Lord Himself came out of thirty years' silence, and forty days of bitter temptation in the wilderness and only then began His active ministry. The fact is that the believer can learn in solitude that which he never can learn among the multitude. The danger of modern Christian activities is that in their very multiplicity we lose our personal grasp on things unseen, and because we are surrounded with the visible, the invisible becomes shadowy and vague. Never must the worker lose secret communion upward and neglect private meditation on things divine, for in solitude with God he gets his strength for service among the multitude.

At last the forty years as shepherd in the wilderness also came to an abrupt end. One day Moses, as he had been doing for forty years, was leading his flock to the pasturage, and he saw a bush burning. Many times had he seen burning bushes, doubtless, but there was something this time which struck him as unique. The bush burned on but would not burn up; and he said, "I will turn aside now and see why the bush is not burnt." That was the miraculous sign of the divine presence, and there Moses received the divine call to leave his solitary life and to return to a life of the most strenuous activity.

He declined at first, and naturally. "Who am I," says Moses, "that I should go and deliver Israel

from the bondage of Pharaoh?" And indeed Moses might have made a very good argument to excuse himself from obeying the divine command. He might have said, "O God, do you not know that I have been forty years in this wilderness because, when I was in favour at court, I struck down one Egyptian? And now I am in disfavour at court, and you tell me to go back and deliver the nation? Impossible!" The argument would have been much stronger than the arguments which we sometimes produce to excuse ourselves from difficult duty. But Moses made no such argument, and when God said, "Surely I will be with thee," he accepted the divine commission and with his brother started down to the land of the Pharaohs.

It is worth our while here to pause for a moment, to realize that God's call to a special service came to Moses in the midst of his daily vocation. There was nothing extraordinary that morning when Moses started for the pasture land. There was no sign that this was to be to him a pivotal day in all his earthly experience. In the midst of his daily toil comes the call. With the call comes the promise, and to the call is returned the loyal response.

This is not the only case of this kind in the world.

I see a farmer threshing in the wine press. Gideon is his name. It never occurred to him as he took the flail and went forth to his ordinary daily task that he was to receive a call that day to

be the deliverer of Israel from the tyranny of Midian. But that was Gideon's day. Covered with chaff, wet with perspiration, suddenly there comes a vision and a call. The result was that a benediction came to Israel, such as they had not known for years, through this turning of the man from his daily task to larger duty.

Elisha is plowing with twelve yoke of oxen and he himself with the twelfth. As he put his hand that day on the handle of the plow he never dreamed that that was his day. But that was his day truly, for storming up from the south came the great prophet Elijah, and taking his mantle off he threw it over the shoulders of Elisha, and Elisha at once knew that he was to be Elijah's successor.

We are at the receipt of customs. Matthew sits there and has opened his little office for the receipt of taxes. Never did he dream that that was to be the pivotal day in his life. But that day the Nazarene came past and looking Matthew quietly in the eye, He said, "Matthew, follow me." That was Matthew's day.

Peter has been fishing all the night and is weary, and rather disappointed because he had caught nothing. In accordance with the divine command he changes his method and encloses a large haul of fish. That was Peter's day, for the command to him was "Follow me," and he left all, boats, fish, net, business, partners, and obeyed the call.

If I have made my meaning clear you will realize that in these days the divine command to you for

larger service may come at any time or any place. You need no Campbell Morgan, no Moody, no Billy Sunday, no revival service in order to receive God's call. It may come as it came to Samuel in the darkness of the night. It may come at any time. Our attitude towards our Heavenly Father is to be the attitude of all these men. Listen, and when the divine call comes assume the attitude of obedience.

Do calls come in these days as they did then? I believe they do. Not, perhaps, in the same way with burning bush or audible voice, but yet with the same clearness and imperative command.

About fifty years ago in London, young Dr. Barnardo, then a medical student, was giving volunteer service in establishing a little school, in one small room, for street waifs in the east end of London. He and a friend acted as janitor, teacher, everything. One night he was closing up his room and the boys had all gone except a little fellow who stood by the stove warming himself. The medical student said to him, "Go home, little boy," but the boy never moved. Dr. Barnardo went on completing arrangements for closing up, and was about to leave when he noticed the lad still there. He walked over to the little fellow and said, "Come, little boy, why don't you go home?" The boy said, "I have no home." The Doctor did not believe it, because at that time he did not fully know the destitution of the east end. Finally he took him to his own lodging and fed him and induced

him to talk. Dr. Barnardo said, "Really, have you no home, little boy?" and the boy replied, "No, I have no father or mother or relatives; I sleep anywhere." "Well," said Dr. Barnardo, "are there any other little boys like you?" The little fellow said, "Lots of them." "Will you take me to see them?" said the Doctor. The boy consented, and so at midnight out they went through the narrow streets, and finally brought up at a place which they entered through a rear alleyway. Then the boy pointing to a coal bin said, "There they are, in there, lots of them." The Doctor lit a match and looked into the coal bin. It was empty. Nothing abashed the boy said, "The cops have been after them; they are on the roof." He then climbed a low brick wall, pulled the Doctor up after him, and there with the tin roof under them and the winter sky over them lay thirteen boys sound asleep. The Doctor's guide said, "Shall I wake them?" and, telling the story, Dr. Barnardo says, "I had this one boy on my hand and did not know what to do with him and now he offered to wake thirteen more on me, so I replied, 'No, let them sleep.'"

Then and there, however, Dr. Barnardo heard God's call to devote himself to the outcast children of the east end of London. That was Dr. Barnardo's day and as a consequence, last night there slept under sheltering roofs of institutions started by the Doctor over seven thousand waifs and strays from the streets of the great city.

Moses heard God's call, heeded and obeyed, and

down he went to Egypt, there to undertake the task of delivering Israel from the bondage of the Egyptian.

Now follows the conflict between Moses and Pharaoh. Notice the attempted compromises on Pharaoh's part with Jehovah :

Exodus v. 2. Pharaoh: "I know not Jehovah and moreover I will not let Israel go."

Exodus viii. 8. After the plague of the frogs Pharaoh says: "Entreat Jehovah and I will let the people go," and when relief comes (viii. 15) Pharaoh hardens his heart.

Once more there comes a turn in the screw of divine pressure (Exodus viii. 25), when flies have cursed the land, excepting only the Israelites' portion. Pharaoh calls for relief and says, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." That was a compromise,—let them go, but not too far away. But when respite comes then Pharaoh's heart is hardened again (v. 32).

Once more in Exodus ix. 28, after the terrible scourge of the hail the king relents and says, "I will let you go." Relief, however, comes and once more the heart of Pharaoh is hardened (Exodus ix. 35), "and he did not let the children of Israel go."

In Exodus x. we have a continuation of the great conflict between Moses and the sovereign, ending by the sovereign saying, "Go now ye that are men," meaning that the women and children must remain behind. But Moses would not accept the compromise. Again, after the plague of the locusts (Ex-

odus x. 24), Pharaoh once more relents—the pressure is terrific—and he says, “Go, only let your flocks and your herds be stayed.” He knew that if Israel’s property were left behind, Israel would return for this property, and again be under his power. To this offer Moses replies, “No, there shall not a hoof be left behind.” Then comes Pharaoh’s answer, “Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day that thou seest my face, thou shalt die.”

Then comes the final turn to the screw of the divine overwhelming pressure, in the slaying of the first born, and all Egypt cries in woe and despair. Then it is that quickly Pharaoh sends for Moses in the night and says, “Go, men, women, children, flocks, herds, everything, and pray for me” (Exodus xii. 31–33).

That is the outcome of the conflict between Jehovah and Pharaoh,—Pharaoh crushed and Jehovah and His people triumphant.

So Israel, led by this wondrous leader, marches out gloriously and Miriam on the farther side of the Red Sea sings with her damsels their song of deliverance.

After this for forty years Moses is substantially in the same general vicinity of Sinai, where he had been previously for forty years, only now he is a leader of people and not a leader of sheep. Here he becomes legislator, being the divine medium through whom God’s laws (the decalogue and other laws) are transmitted to men.

This leads us to say that in these later days since the discovery of the Hammurabi code of laws, it is customary for some critics to say that the Mosaic Code is copied from that of Hammurabi, and that there is nothing original about the Mosaic legislation. To this our brief reply is that the Hammurabi Code is saturated with idolatry. The Mosaic Code is pure from all idolatrous tendencies. It is based on that declaration, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." In the second place the Hammurabi Code shows signs of licentious worship in making definite legal provision for what are called the "Sisters of the Gods," under whose ceremonies there lay a substratum of gross licentiousness.

The Mosaic Code is free from all that.

In looking at the character of Moses we realize that of all Old Testament worthies he stands easily the chief. There arose not a prophet like unto him to the end of the history of Israel. As Paul in the New Testament is easily the first of the apostles, so Moses is easily the first of the prophets. In view of this fact we are much astonished when we find such a contrast between two experiences in this man's wonderful career.

You remember in the matter of the golden calf as told in Exodus xxxii. Moses pleads for his people. In bitter sorrow over their defection, and anxiety over their fate, he says, "Forgive their sin and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book."

That is very wonderful. It is as though he said, "If they must perish or I must perish, let me perish,—only forgive them." That was almost divine. Yet later on, as told in Numbers, the eleventh chapter, when Israel lusts after flesh and cries, "Give us flesh to eat," you find Moses occupying a position that is fairly startling.

It seems that the burden of the people had so worn on this man that he lost control of himself and as he hears the people weep from afar, Moses is displeased. Turning to God he cries with terribly faultfinding spirit, "Wherefore hast thou dealt ill with thy servant and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I brought them forth that thou shouldst say unto me, carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father carryeth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers. Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand."

That is most startling. Is that the same man who plead so to save the people? It simply shows how fallible the greatest of men are, and how he who thinks that he standeth should take heed lest he fall.

It was speaking unadvisedly with his lips that

prevented this man from entering into the land. To see the land was his privilege but to enter the land was denied. And so, on Nebo, Moses looks over the land from south to north, then passes away, and Jehovah buries him, and to this day no man knows the place of his sepulchre.

But in Jude we are given a flash of light upon that burial ceremony on Mount Nebo, for Jude says that Satan contended for the body of Moses and the Archangel resisted. Why do you think Satan desired the body of Moses, and why did God send the Archangel to resist him? My interpretation is this: Down in Egypt, from which the people had come out, it was customary to deify their rulers. Israel tended always to idolatry, and there was danger that when Moses was dead Israel would deify their leader and start to worship him. Their idolatrous tendency is abundantly proved (2 Kings xviii. 4) in the case of the brazen serpent which they brought up, and to which even in Hezekiah's day they were burning incense.

Had Satan got that body and brought it down into the camp there was danger that the people would embalm it and worship it. That (I think) is one of the causes of the conflict between Satan and the Archangel, for God would not allow Moses' body to be thus abused, and would never let Moses, the proclaimer of one God, be the occasion of idolatry.

It has always been to me a comfort that after all Moses did get into the land, for on the Mount of

Transfiguration it was his privilege to enter. Before his death, from the southern extremity of the land he looked over to the northern boundary line where Mount Hermon could be easily seen. When Moses came to the Mount of Transfiguration on the north of the land, he entered and looked clean over to the south. Oh, if we could only know what flashed through Moses' mind as from the northern mountain he saw the southern mountain where he had breathed his last in his earthly pilgrimage !

Yet once more Moses appears. This time, when on the Isle of Patmos John sees and hears things divine, there suddenly breaks upon him a great song as of a multitude singing, and he listens to the word of the song. Lo and behold it is the "song of Moses and the Lamb." In that better land the evangelist says he heard the name of the Redeemer and of Moses coupled together. The name of Moses is the only name in Heaven coupled with the name of the Son of God.

There Moses is exalted above all the sons of men and that makes me believe that Moses was the grandest man that ever lived or ever will live, he being the only man whose name is taken on the lips of the redeemed in glory in conjunction with the name of the Redeemer Himself. Surely, then, we can say with more of emphasis than was said in the Old Testament—There has not been seen a prophet like unto this one with whom God spake face to face.

VII

THE FIVE GATES OF APPROACH TO THE HUMAN MIND

WE are facing each other at this moment, but you do not see me and I do not see you. No one ever saw me, not even my mother. She saw my body, she saw my garments, but me, never. Nobody has ever seen me excepting He of whom the Psalmist speaks so wondrously in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm. I dwell hidden from all observation, and no man can reach me unless he reaches me through one of five gates of approach.

It is of great importance, therefore, that preachers and teachers should understand how best to use these five gates of approach to the mind of the hearer in the congregation or of the scholar in the class. These five gates are, eye gate, ear gate, nose gate, mouth gate, touch gate. We call them the five senses. It is impossible for us to imagine a sixth sense. Through these five senses all knowledge of the external world, all communication with our fellow men has to enter. Of these, by far the most rapid is the sense of sight. More marches into the human mind through eye gate than through all the other gates put together. This is especially true in childhood.

The next most rapid method of approach to the human mind is through ear gate. When you cut out what we have learned through eye gate and ear gate, you cut out the enormous majority of the facts that find entrance to the human mind. Where eye gate and ear gate collide, that is to say, where different facts appeal simultaneously to those two gates, eye gate has the right of way and ear gate is pushed to the side. It is impossible to appeal to a human being through ear gate while at the same time some one else is appealing to him through eye gate. Dr. Moore, your President, is a noted speaker, but if he were on this platform and were talking to you about the most fascinating thing in the world, I would wipe him out in a moment if you would allow me to appeal simply to your eyes. Imagine him standing there and I here. He is addressing you on a most important theme. But if I begin to do this (here the speaker took off his coat and put it under a chair), he is finished. (Great laughter.) I have proved what I said.

It is, therefore, imperative for the preacher or teacher to learn how most wisely to use eye gate in connection with ear gate. When the speaker has the attention of his hearers through these two gates simultaneously, then nothing can intervene. The mischievous boy in Sunday-school who has brought the seductive pin, forgets all about his pin when he is seeing something and having it explained ; the pin has a moment of rest.

It is not often possible to appeal to an audience

through nose gate. I have done it, but the opportunities are rare. At one time we had the lesson of Mary anointing the Saviour's feet, and it is said that the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. Before the lesson was read in Sunday-school I said, "All teachers to the platform, please." They all rose and came. "All teachers take out their handkerchiefs, please." All did so. Of course, the school was on edge, thinking, "What is he going to do now?" Then I produced a bottle of cologne and poured the whole bottle over their handkerchiefs saying, "Teachers, go to your classes, waving handkerchiefs; scholars, smell." Of course, the whole house smelt of cologne. I asked, "Does it smell sweet?" "Yes, sir." "Well, to-day we have a lesson telling of a house smelling far sweeter. Turn to the lesson."

When, however, eye gate and ear gate are closed, as in the case of Hellen Keller, we have to fall back on touch gate, and it is surprising to see how sensitive touch gate is when eye gate and ear gate are shut. Some things can never pass through touch gate, such as colour and perfume, but armies of facts have marched into Helen Keller's mind through touch gate.

If in a Sunday-school class it is possible to combine an attack on eye gate, ear gate and touch gate simultaneously, then you have got firm hold of that scholar. It is impossible for a scholar to move while looking, listening and touching. He is a

clever teacher who knows how to march facts into the human mind through three gates simultaneously.

I am going to deal this morning with the attack on eye gate, one often neglected by preacher and by Sunday-school teacher. I say by preacher, for alas ! preachers fail to use eye gate with the younger members of their congregations. It can be most successfully done if you will only take the pains. Object sermons are welcome not to children only, but to the adults in every congregation that you possibly can minister to. This is my experience.

When I became Superintendent of City Missions and began preaching in churches up-town I went to a very conservative Presbyterian church where I knew I should have to preach frequently. I said to the elders, "May I preach five minute object sermons to the children?" Courtesy prevented them from saying, "No," so the clerk of the session said, "Well, you might try it." The following Sunday I preached an object sermon of about five minutes. The next day I got a letter from the clerk of the session saying, "The session desires me to say that you can preach as many object sermons as you want in this pulpit."

The adults are just as well pleased as the young people with object sermons but, as minister, you woo and win the young people by a five to eight minute object talk as you can do in no other possible way, so that they look forward with a great deal of pleasure to going to church. At Bar Harbor,

where I preach every summer, they often 'phone me, "Are you going to preach to the children this morning?" If I should say no, which I never do, the children would stay away; if I say yes, the children come.

Now the underlying principle in the handling of objects for spiritual purposes is this: Everything material has some likeness to something spiritual. That is a law without any exception. Let me repeat it. Everything material has some likeness to something spiritual. That is, there is an analogy along some line or other between every material thing and some spiritual thing. It is for the preacher or the teacher to discern those likenesses, those analogies, so as to be able to rightly handle the material object for spiritual purposes.

Out in the East a missionary told me this spring that the syllogism does not touch the Eastern mind. But a parable or analogy will convince an Oriental, and he says, "That settles it." Just so a parable or an analogy will reach a child where a syllogism will fall flat. Learn then, my friend, the analogy between things material and things spiritual, between the visible and the invisible.

How can we do this? By patient work. In the days when I was trying to learn, I would sit down in my study, pick out any object in the room and force my mind to discover an analogy between that object and some spiritual truth. Not all objects are equally rich in analogies, I know full well; but it will do you good to sit down and force your mind

to draw even obscure analogies. Slowly you will become adept in seeing just where the attractive analogies lie. I was aroused when I was a student in the Seminary to paying attention to this matter of object teaching by an address I heard given in a Sunday-school convention by the then noted Sunday-school worker, Edward Eggleston. I went to that Sunday-school convention with the superb self-conceit of a theological student who thought he knew it all. I soon found I knew nothing, and then I began to learn.

Turn now to these analogies, and permit me to give you specimens of analogies between things material and things spiritual. Here is a watch. That watch in many points is like a boy. One time in a class I said to a boy, "In what respect is this watch like a boy?" The boy promptly said, "It has two hands."

"Yes. Are the hands pointing right?"

"I suppose so."

"Do your hands always point right?"

Shamefacedly he said, "No." How swiftly that arrow sped to its mark!

Then we went on and the following analogies were developed: every watch has an inside and an outside and so has a boy. The inside of that watch is far more important than the outside, and so it is with a boy; for as a watch with a gorgeous outside, jewelled, and a poor inside is a poor watch, and one with a pewter outside but a good inside is a good watch, so a boy or girl dressed up to the nines,

and foul inside is a poor boy or girl, and a poorly dressed boy or girl, clean inside, is of more value than gold, yea, than much fine gold. That watch needs winding up every day, and so does a boy. Boys' bodies all need winding up three times a day, breakfast, dinner and supper, and every right kind of boy gets a twist or two between meals if he can get hold of something to eat; that is right. But a boy has not only a body, he has a mind, and his mind needs to be wound up. What is the public school for? To wind up his mind. What is college for? To wind up his mind. What is the theological seminary for? To wind up your minds. It is a good thing to keep your mind wound up. But a boy has more than a body and a mind, he has a soul, and the soul has to be wound up. Who can wind it up? Only God. See how quickly these analogies come. This watch is now invisible to anybody here (putting it in his pocket). Does the watch say, "Ha, nobody can see me now, I am going to stop"? Oh, no. It is a good watch; light or dark, it keeps on doing its work. But many a boy and girl says, "Teacher is not seeing now, it is my chance." See what a good example the watch sets; light or dark, visible or invisible, it is working all the time as well as it knows how.

This watch, if it goes right, goes according to the sun. If when the sun is at the zenith this watch does not say twelve o'clock, the watch is wrong. The sun governs all watches, and they are right or wrong according as they synchronize with it. So

I am right or wrong according as I synchronize with whom? With Him whom we call the Sun of Righteousness. When I keep time with Him, then I am right; if not, I am wrong.

Suppose you had a lesson on Jesus' utterances with regard to the bread of life. "I am the bread of life; your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live." Take, then, into the pulpit, or into the class, some bread. What is this for? To satisfy my hunger and give me strength. Bread stands for all bodily nourishment, and God so made us that we need it, and it is right that we should have it. But there are more kinds of hunger than one; there is the hunger I feel in my stomach; there is the hunger I feel in my mind. Every question a boy asks is a sign that he is hungry, otherwise he would not ask it; he is hungry for knowledge. A boy says to me, "Where is Antwerp, that the Germans have just taken? I am anxious to know." If, in reply, I offer him a piece of bread, will that satisfy his mental hunger? What does he want to satisfy this mental hunger? A geography. I hand him a geography and I say, "Look at the map of Belgium there." He does so and is satisfied. All books, all educational institutions, have for their object the satisfying some kind of mental hunger. I supply the boy's *body* with bread, I supply the boy's *mind* with facts.

But the boy has a different hunger. He is anxious to know what to do about his sins. He knows

he is a transgressor; he knows that he cannot cleanse his own heart. The boy is hungry for spiritual knowledge, and I hand him an arithmetic. Will that help him? What does he need? He needs the Book which contains the story of Him who is the bread of life, and you point him to this Book. So physical hunger may be met by bread, mental hunger is met by books, but spiritual hunger may be met only by Him who is the bread of life.

Take another illustration. This I never used before last Sunday, but last Sunday I preached to a very large mission congregation spilling over into side rooms, on the complaint brought against Paul in Thessalonica where the people said, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." I held up a large, very handsome vase and said, "See; I have a lot of these vases on the mantelpiece at home, and if I come out to breakfast and find them all upside down, I say, 'What is the matter with the servant girl this morning? She must be crazy.'" What would I do? Go around and turn them all right side up. What did they say about Paul? "This man turns the world upside down." Is that true? Yes, because the world was then upside down, and if you turn it upside down again, you turn it right side up. We are upside down, and what does God want to do with us? Nothing but what Paul wanted to do—turn us upside down again, so that we may be right side up.

You see, I am using only simple things; I am not using ornate, complex objects, and I never do. If you go into complex object teaching, you will surprise and delight more than you will profit. That is the danger of all of these electrical experiments and clever chemical experiments, both with adults and children; they will say, "My, wasn't he clever?" and will forget the truth you wanted to impart. Therefore, the utmost simplicity is what I would recommend to any young man trying in the Sunday-school or in the pulpit to use objects.

Here is a bunch of keys. To me that is very valuable. No two keys in that bunch will open the same lock. This is a key to my apartment; this is a key to my door in the office; this is a key to the compartment inside the safe where valuables are kept. Every key has its own door that it opens. These keys open things material—doors, desks, safes. Are they the only kind of keys that there are? No. There are compartments of knowledge that I want to get into, and these keys will not help me there. Books are keys to mental storehouses of priceless treasure. Every good book is a key to a priceless inheritance; every bad book is a key to the bottomless pit. See, then, how carefully I must use my keys. The public school is offering you boys and girls keys; the college is offering you young men and women keys. If you should see me go down the James River and throw this bunch of keys into the water, you would say, "What is the matter with him; has he lost his

senses ? ” Yet boys and girls in the public schools throw their keys into the water ; they will not use them ; alas ! what is the matter with them ?

Then there are keys to things spiritual, and many throw those keys away. This is a key to everything spiritual (indicating Bible). There is the key to eternal life.

Now do you see that in all of these analogies I work always from the material towards the mental and then the spiritual, because that is the way we are constituted. The first that appeals to us is the physical, then the intellectual, then the spiritual, and the scholars will follow your thoughts steadily along those lines.

Here is another very little thing. This is a compass, that I wear on my watch-chain. What is the use of that compass ? To guide me. There is the needle that points to the north and the south. If I am in the forest and do not know which way is out, but know that I ought to go north, and the sun is beclouded so that I cannot see it, I take out my compass, look at it and say, “ Yes, all right.” I can find my way out of great difficulty with that compass. No ship would go to sea without a compass, for on it often depends its safety.

Now then, what is that like ? In spiritual things that is like the guidance I get from God's Book ; that is my compass. That shows me which way not to go ; that shows me which way to go. The Bible is our compass, and the man who refuses to take the Bible as his compass is as foolish as the

man who goes to sea and refuses to have a compass on his boat. You are responsible if God gives you a compass and you will not use it.

Just imagine what a fine thing this glass of water would be on a hot day when you had travelled far and had not had a drink. You would drink it with great avidity. (Pours ink into glass.) See; too bad; it is spoiled. Would you drink it now? How easily it was spoiled; how quickly defiled. Can I cleanse it just as easily? No. Easy to defile, hard to cleanse. So it is with my heart; however clean and pure it might have been, if a little sin is poured into my heart, it is suddenly defiled. One lie will defile your heart; one taking of what does not belong to you will defile your heart. Easy to defile. Easy to cleanse? No. That is why the Psalmist said, "Cleanse thou my heart, Jehovah," because he could not cleanse it and nobody could but only God.

St. James says, "Behold how much wood is kindled by how small a fire. And the tongue is a fire." Here is a match. (It is perfectly surprising, let me say in passing, how you men look at this match. I would think you never saw a match before. That shows how eye gate dominates.) It is a very simple thing, but I can make such arrangements that this match would bring about a great disaster. I could have this chapel mined and explosives put underneath and a long fuse put to a place of safety. Then all I would need to do to blow up the whole place would be that (lighting

match). It can do terrible damage. When I was a boy in Constantinople, where the houses are of wood, a Greek in his house, which was near ours, had an image of the Virgin, and in front of that an oil lamp burning day and night. The soot from that lamp had spread over the board wall. One night as he was sitting in his room a little spark flew from the lamp, lit on the soot and the fire began to spread. He said, "I will spit you out," and he went and spat on it, but it had gone too far. He then went to the pump to get a pitcher of water. The wind slammed the door to, and he couldn't get in. His house burned and fifteen hundred other houses with it, ours among them. "Behold how much wood is kindled by how small a fire." And the tongue is a fire—that is the point—a tongue set on fire by Hell and setting on fire the whole world. To show what an evil tongue can work, I have known of a church split in two by a woman's tongue. She kept it going until the church was broken up.

Here is another example. You all have hands. I used this in the Bar Harbor church this summer. Even the adults liked it, and a multi-millionaire came to me afterwards and said, "That was fine." I say this to make you realize that you should not be afraid to use object talks anywhere.

What wonderful things hands are. Without hands this chapel could not have been built. Without hands cathedrals would not go up. Without hands clothes would not be made. Without hands

the watch in my pocket could not be put together, for no man could make a watch with his feet. Are these hands good things? That depends on how we use them. If I have a quarrel with my brother and draw off and smash his teeth down his throat with my fists, is that a good thing? No. If my brother is sick and I carry him a bowl of broth and smooth his pillow, and sit by his side, is that a good thing? Yes. Hands, therefore, are good or bad according as I use them. They ought to be rightly used; they may be wrongly used. They are blessings or the reverse, according to how you make use of them. What God intends is that they shall be a blessing to others.

Your eyes, you have a pair of them—no, I beg your pardon—everybody has three pairs. You have got bodily eyes, which are wonderful things, but I don't want to stop to talk about them; I want to talk about the others you possess. You have another pair that I call the eyes of the mind. Tom comes from school with a slate and an arithmetic under his arm. He sits down after supper and starts to work out his lesson. Presently he says, "I can't see." What can't he see? He sees the figures, he sees the slate, yet he says, "I can't see." His big brother, looking over his shoulder, says, "Tom, you have added there where you ought to have subtracted," and Tom exclaims, "Oh, I see." What does he see? Intellectual light has dawned upon him and he sees with a pair of eyes more important than physical eyes, because all

great inventions and sublime truths are the result of men seeing something intellectual. Then there is a third pair of eyes that all have but many do not use, and they are your spiritual eyes, which see things eternal, things moral, things that lay hold on life everlasting. And just as I want rightly to use my physical and intellectual eyes, so I want these two spiritual eyes to be used in the proper way. Thus I have six eyes, and if I use them all right, God's blessing then rests on the threefold vision He has given me, vision physical, vision intellectual, vision spiritual.

Here is a Pennsylvania Railroad time-table. What is that for? That is to guide me when I want to go anywhere to a place marked on this time-table. What is that like? It is like God's time-table given me in His Book to get to a certain place. That Book tells me how to get to Heaven, and how to get to Hell, both of them ; it guides me straight up or straight down as I want one or the other. That Book has examples of men who got to Heaven and of men who did not. This time-table, however, would not be of much use to me if I never looked at it and, as a consequence, went to the depot to go to New York and sat there for hours. A railroad time-table is not made to be put in your pocket and never used ; and this Bible is not made to be put on the centre table in the parlour and covered with a doily and never used. A man is a fool who never uses a time-table if he travels, and he is a greater fool if he never uses

God's time-table on his journey to tell him how to get from this world to the world everlasting.

Here is a pair of scales which deal with the whole question of weighing, and the Bible has a good deal to say about weighing. If you happen to have a lesson on Belshazzar, you remember it says, "Weighed, wanting." These scales weigh letters. But there are other kinds of scales; there are scales that weigh you, and nearly everybody wants to see once in a while how much he weighs, whether he has gained or lost. In Washington they have scales so delicate that they would weigh not only this piece of paper, but if I write my name on that piece of paper with a lead pencil and weighed it again, the scales would show how much the lead that came off of my lead pencil weighed. That is wonderful. Then we can weigh other things. A barometer weighs the air. We measure many things; the thermometer measures heat; the neurometer measures your nerve power and your grip. If only we could get scales that would weigh a man's honesty, no bank in the world would be without them. A young man comes in and says, "I would like to get a place in this bank." The president replies, "Step on that pair of scales." Around the indicator goes perhaps to "Dishonest." Many a man would decline to step on those scales. Suppose there was a pair of scales that showed a filthy lie? God has got such scales. He said with regard to Belshazzar, "Weighed, wanting." Belshazzar had undoubtedly said with

regard to himself, "Full weight." The Bible says the Lord weighs the spirits of men. He knows how much I weigh. If I am short weight, what can be done? Nothing save for Jesus Christ to make my short weight of unrighteousness full weight with His righteousness.

Here is a photograph of a noted man in Turkey to-day. Oh, no, that is not a photograph of the man; it is a photograph of his face and of his clothes. You all have had photographs taken and have arrayed yourselves in your best for that purpose. Now my own photograph suggests that it would be wonderful if any one could take a photograph of my mind. I wonder, if I got a photograph of my mind, whether it would look as orderly as a photograph of my body. How would you like to have a photograph made of your mind and pass it around amongst your friends, saying, "That is my mind"? Probably some would say, "Is that a photograph of your mind? Well, you need not come around here again." But God says, "I know the things that come into your mind." He has got your mental photograph. Just imagine the spiritual photograph of a debauchee, or a Bowery bum, or of a gilded gambler, or a drunkard. Would he show it to any living soul? God has got our mental and spiritual photographs. Every idea that comes into your mind, every desire that exists in your heart, is known to Him. Be careful, then, that your mental and your spiritual photograph be decent.

Here is a little electric light, used when I want to look at the clock at night. I have a larger one to use when I want to walk along a dark path to see a neighbour, which shows the rough places I must avoid. That is a useful thing. What analogy is there between this and things spiritual? You can get it from the Bible, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." What this is to my physical feet, God's Word is to my spiritual feet; it keeps me from danger, it warns me from pitfalls, it guides me in the right way. If I wanted with this light to go from here to the city, and there were no street lights, I would not say, "Oh, there is no use in my starting, I can't see the city." No, I cannot, but what can I see? Four steps in front of me. Take those four steps and I see another four steps, and when I take those four steps I see another four steps, and thus it will light me to the city. The Book does not show me the path all through my life at once, but it lights me a few steps at a time, on, on, until I get to that land where they need no sun, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof.

Now I have said enough and more than enough. If you say, "This man has brought us all he has got," I say, "Not by a long shot, because the matter of object teaching is endless." Nature is brimming over with analogies. I have used only what I happened to have with me, but my table drawers in New York are full of objects. **What** you want to do is to study the analogies between things ma-

terial and things spiritual. If your work along these lines is based on common sense, the reward of your work will be actual gain in power, not only on the Sunday-school platform, but in the pulpit; you will win the hearts of the children, and in that way extend your ministry, and you will be able to bring many a child to a knowledge of the truth whom otherwise you might not be able to reach.

These children size things up to a nicety. One time in Bar Harbor I gave an object lesson with a little bicycle oiler and a little sand and I drew out the point that sand makes machinery work hard and finally stops it, while oil makes it move smoothly. I then said, "Sand in a household is angry words that make friction and trouble between children; oil is smooth words that make no friction. I will give you two drops of oil to use often, and one of them is 'please,' and the other of them is 'thank you.'" The next day but one a lady sent me word that on Monday morning she had gone into the nursery where her boy and girl were who had been present on the previous day at the church, and the boy was domineering over the girl. Just as she entered, the girl exclaimed, "Jim, you need a little oil."

One time at Jekyl Island I was preaching to children and my theme was, "Let your light so shine," illustrated by a little candle. A small boy was in church for the first time in his life, and he never took his eyes off of me as I explained that letting your light shine was setting a good example,

and that God would light your light though Satan would try to blow it out. Like all red-headed boys, this child had a fiery temper, and the next day it blazed up. At once he said, "My light has gone out." Presently he cooled off, and then said, "I think my light is lit again." He then made his nurse put a candle in his nursery. She asked him, "What for; you have an electric light." But he insisted on a candle. One time in the nursery he went off in a terrible rage and then said, "Satan put my light out; light that candle." Presently cooling down he added, "My light is burning again." I mention that to show that four-year-olds will catch hold almost immediately of an illustration by which Christ's truth may be driven into their hearts.

To some of you there will come the responsibility of handling eye-teaching in the Sunday-school or the pulpit by the stereopticon. I have made very great use of the stereopticon on Sunday. The first time I ever saw it used was in a High Church service in the city of London. I heard that a rector was giving stereopticon sermons on Sunday and I went down to see. The place was so packed that I could hardly get in. From the beginning to the end it was interesting. First there went on the screen "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." Then the regular Church of England service was thrown on the screen as also the hymns. After that came pictures of Bible scenes, only a very few, on which the lec-

turer spoke, making application of each picture to the congregation, solemnly, powerfully. When the service was over I said: "I have learned a lesson." I began to introduce that into our City Mission work in New York. Now you can get most beautiful picture-hymns. Rau of Philadelphia has a lot of beautiful ones, and also McAllister in New York.

For example, there is a hymn picture of "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" which exhibits only the hymn and a cross. That is all. You simply explain what the cross means to the world. Then the hymn is sung. If you have a hymn like "I gave my life for thee," etc., there appears on one side of the screen Van Dyke's Christ. You explain it briefly and then they sing. For spiritual effect, for solemnity, for drawing a Sunday night crowd, I know of nothing that in power approaches the use of the stereopticon. It is not at all sensational. It is not clap-trap. It is serious, Christlike work. My only warning is that you do not try to show too many pictures at one service. A half-dozen pictures are enough, besides the hymns. Otherwise you begin to confuse your audience by the multiplicity of the pictures.

The moving picture has come to stay and we have got, as soon as we can get proper films, to use it in the church. I am convinced of this, though I am very conservative in my theology, as you know. As soon as we get the right moving pictures, we shall use them. But when you come to the

psychology of your audience you have a serious problem. There is such rapid motion in the pictures that the spiritual effect is apt to be lost. The audience is all excitement to know what is coming next. So that the psychology of the audience has got to be carefully watched ; otherwise, you have amusement, and not spiritual instruction. I have in mind at present only one or two sets of films that I would be willing to use on Sunday, and one which I have used, namely Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. To show what care I would take I will tell you what I did on a Sunday night. I gave notice that no one would be admitted without a ticket, and that no ticket would be given to any one under sixteen years of age. With every ticket a cheap edition of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress was given, they promising that if possible they would read it before the moving picture was to be put on the screen. In addition a printed schedule was given of all the scenes, the ticket holders promising that if they could not read the whole book that they would at least read those portions that would be illustrated by the film. When the night finally arrived, before each film was shown an interlocutor spoke up and said, for instance, "The next film will show Christian and Pliable falling into the Slough of Despond. Christian alone gets out on the right side and passes on, Pliable goes back." Then came the picture. As soon as that film was through the interlocutor spoke up again, so as to eliminate all excited antici-

pation of what was coming next. I never had a more solemn service in my life. When, at last, the day comes when pictures of the Life of Christ are made, I would never consent to having them used without the audience being properly prepared to know what the pictures mean and the application of each picture to the human heart and life.

VIII

THE RELIGIOUS USE OF THE IMAGINATION

THE task set before the Sunday-school teacher is one of extraordinary difficulty. The teacher is to make vivid to the scholar events the nearest to us of which is removed by eighteen hundred years, while some of them are removed from us by four thousand years. These events which are to be made clear to our classes took place in lands that they have never visited, and conversations took place in tongues of which they have never heard. The habits and customs of the people of Bible times differ vastly from those with which our scholars are acquainted. And yet we are to make vivid to them the events with which the Scriptures deal, and from those events we are to draw certain practical applications for life in the twentieth century. If it were not for the fact that the Divine Spirit inspired this Book and fitted it for the human mind and heart, and if it were not for the further fact that the Divine Spirit is willing to aid us in applying the Book to the consciences of our scholars, we might as well cease before we begin, for the task would be beyond us. You will realize how difficult the task is if you pause for a moment and try to understand how hard it would be to make our

scholars enter into the life of Alfred the Great, into the times of the Crusades, or even into the times of the Pilgrim Fathers, which are very near to us compared with Bible times.

To do this, that is to say, to make vivid the story, to make living the actors, would not be so very difficult if we could transplant ourselves and our classes to Bible lands. One of the grand ways in which the preacher and the teacher can be better fitted for the responsibility incurred is by visiting these Bible lands. As the French critic, Renan, has said, Palestine is the Fifth Gospel. No one who has been through Palestine, for example, or into Egypt, but reads every part of this Word that deals with those lands with an entirely new view. It has been my privilege to be in both of those lands, and when I read the story of Jacob at Bethel, his dream, and the ladder of the angels, instantly I am back where I spent the night and sitting in the tent door after dark began to let my imagination run. The rocks, the starlit sky, the whole environment, comes back to me at once, and I am with Jacob as he lay down on the ground with a stone for his pillow. The moment I read of any experience of our Master on the Sea of Galilee, I am there, because it was my privilege to sail that sea in the quiet evening when everything was gentle and calm. It was also my privilege the very next day to pass by the shore of that sea and witness the downrush of a tornado of wind, so that in ten minutes the sea was whipped

into wild confusion, in which the boat on which we sailed so quietly the night before would have had a very difficult time. One of the grand ways, therefore, in which to be able to make the Bible vivid is to go to the land.

The next best way is by pictures, and with the Perry Penny Pictures, which we can get now for one cent a piece, we can make vivid, or at least more vivid than is otherwise possible, some of these Bible scenes and events. These are the days of splendid photographs, and you can get photographs of the Sinaitic peninsula, Egypt, Palestine, Nineveh, Babylon, Rome, and in this way can furnish yourselves with a setting for the events which took place in Bible times. These are the days also of stereopticons, when on a screen to a whole school at a time you can set forth some charming scenes of Bible localities. The days are rapidly coming when we shall be able to see moving pictures along these lines; they have not yet arrived because religious moving pictures are still like angel's visits, few and far between. But you young men will see the day when cheap moving picture machines and good moving picture films on religious themes shall be available to any pastor of a fair sized church. Of course, the moving picture gives life to the scene. The best moving picture I have seen laying hold on New Testament times was one of a set of rolls, all of them made in Palestine or in Egypt. Never will I forget some of the beautiful scenes of our Saviour's life that were set before a large

gathering of men and women. For example, one of them was on Bethlehem's Plain at night. You could see the sheep lying down in masses, their backs lit up by oxyhydrogen light, very much like sheep in one of Millet's pictures. You could see the shepherds sitting by, quietly watching. By and by the light strengthened and strengthened and strengthened until it became tremendous. The shepherds arose, bowed, then started off for Bethlehem. There is no scholar but who, seeing a picture like this, would be charmed, illumined, and the whole story of the shepherds on Bethlehem's Plain would become enormously more vivid.

Never will I forget the arrival of Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem at the taxing, Mary riding on the donkey, Joseph leading the animal, crowds coming and going, they knocking here and there : "No, go on, no room here for you" ; until at last they lodged in the stable.

Now there is an enormous opportunity for moving pictures along these lines. You are no doubt very conservative. So am I. But if I had the opportunity in this way to make the Bible story vivid to the eye and supplement it by the appeal to the ear, I would seize it at once and thus would bring the story home to my hearers with tremendous power.

This, however, is not yet possible. What then ? The only recourse we have is to make proper use of our imaginations. What we have seen we can describe. He must be a dullard who, having seen

a railroad accident and having helped to pull the wounded out of the cars, cut to pieces with window glass, cannot tell that story vividly. He has seen it, and felt it, and he can tell it. The trouble with Bible incidents is that we have not seen nor properly felt them, therefore we cannot properly picture the story to scholars. The thing for us to do is to cultivate the imagination. Years ago I read Tyndall's article on the scientific use of the imagination, in which he goes on to show the way we can picture to ourselves the carving out of cañons and the laying down of deltas by our mighty rivers in ages gone by. He bids us, for example, watch in a rain-storm any little rill that starts down the side of the road to a lower level; you will see that little rill, hardly thicker than your finger or possibly your wrist, tearing away earth from the side of its channel, carrying along *débris*, straw, leaves, little twigs, and rushing them down the declivity into some little lake formed at the bottom of the hill. When the rain-storm has passed and the water has dried out, you see in that little bit of a diminutive lake a delta; you see earth that that rivulet brought down and deposited there. That furnishes your imagination with a basis on which to go back towards prehistoric times, and to realize how a river like the Mississippi or the Amazon has torn down the sides of its banks, has unearthed rocks and stones, carried them in its great current and deposited them at its mouth, forming its vast delta, covering sometimes hun-

dreds of acres, sometimes scores of square miles. So that you see how, by using your imagination and projecting yourself into the past, you realize what has taken place on a grand scale.

I thought to myself then, "That's right; why should we not use our imaginations along religious lines, so that, judging by what takes place to-day, we can project ourselves into the past and make vivid things which took place two, three, four thousand years ago?" That, I believe, is perfectly possible.

We want, however, to get hold of some fundamental principle which will govern us in this work of constructive imagination. This is the principle: under similar circumstances men everywhere and always act in the same way. Men are ever the same; they love, they hate, they fear, they hope, to-day, as they did forty centuries ago. A crowd to-day that is panic-stricken will act exactly as a panic-stricken crowd would have acted a thousand years ago. A crowd that is very anxious to get into a building, and is desirous to see or receive something there, will act in exactly the same way as a crowd did under the same circumstances in the time of our Blessed Lord. Thus we can think ourselves back, can project ourselves into the past, and reproduce in our own imagination the way in which men talked, wrought, acted in the times of patriarch, prophet or apostle.

In this use of our imaginations, however, we must be on our guard. Never make an illegitimate

use of the imagination, bringing in things that are not germane and not based on probable fact. Some years ago I had a series of articles to furnish for a book, and among others I wanted an article that called for the religious use of the imagination. I wrote to a noted evangelist asking him to furnish such an article, which he did. That article I never used, because his use of the imagination was beyond the bounds of sanity. He imagined Barabbas in prison; he imagined the day when some one came, and, knocking at the door, said, "Is Barabbas here?" The answer was yes. "I want to see him, I have come from Pilate." He confers with Barabbas and tells the robber, "You are at liberty, another man has been delivered to death in your place, you are discharged." Barabbas is then filled with joy and starts out from prison. So far it is legitimate; now comes what I considered illegitimate. He pictures Barabbas seeing a great crowd passing in one direction, excited, hurried. Barabbas says, "Where is this crowd going?" The reply is, "Don't you know? Three men are going to be crucified out here; we are going to see it." Barabbas joins the crowd, passes out of the city gate and comes to Calvary. There Barabbas sees the one on the centre cross; he asks who he is, and is told that he was condemned to crucifixion while Barabbas, who was to be crucified, was given his liberty. Then the writer makes Barabbas understand that Jesus was given for him, and makes the robber prostrate himself on the ground and

accept Jesus as his Saviour. Splendid imagination, but with no basis of fact. I threw the whole thing into the waste basket because imagination used in that style is not proper. Chasten your imagination, therefore; give it proper rein, but never let it run away wild, as in this case I think it did.

One of the troubles with the Biblical narratives, I think, is that they are so extraordinarily terse. Very few details are given. Take the miracles of our Lord; why, in a chapter you will find four or five noted miracles portrayed, but all in compact form, the barest outline being given to you. It is for us to fill in the outline, to paint the picture whose merest sketch we have. That can only be done by patient work. Of course, I know that every one is not endowed by nature with equal imaginative power. There are some imaginations that are swift, others are slow. But my point is this, that every one can quicken and cultivate his imagination so that however dull you may be to-day, a year from to-day proper work will see you very much further along the line towards success.

Take now, if I may be allowed to set it before you, the way in which your humble servant gets to work. We have the story of Amram and Jochebed, Miriam and little Moses and the princess. I read the story and then sit down in my study, close my eyes and begin to think. First, I paint the environment; it is Egypt, of course; and I see a great river. On either side I see palm trees; along the banks are bulrushes, a pyramid over there, and an

obelisk yonder. I see two women coming down, and one of them has a baby in her arms; the other is younger. Down they come and I see them look up and down the bank. They go to a place which they think is good. They put into the rushes a little basket in which the baby is. The older woman says something to the younger one, and then goes away, the younger one staying there, watching. Oh, there they come; a lot of women in rich dresses, one of them evidently very well-to-do; the others, attendants. Thus I sit still with my eyes shut, and paint and paint and paint.

Sometimes when I am doing that kind of thing something very funny happens. I remember one time I was repainting this scene, and I saw a crocodile come along and poke his nose under the basket. I saw him tip it over, snatch the baby, and disappear, and I said, "Oh, Moses is gone!" Had that really happened, what a disaster it would have been! For that little ark carried more of value than any steamship that ever sailed the ocean, because it carried as freight Moses, the grandest man who has ever lived so far. Then I corrected that part of my imagination, because I saw that the princess would never have come down to bathe in the river where crocodiles were. You have got to guard your imagination.

Go to work and paint; by and by the facility will come to you slowly. Take, for example, the story of the Good Samaritan, so short, but so full of useful lessons for the twentieth century. Sit

down again, my fellow worker, and paint. Get the environment. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is down, down, down, four thousand feet or so. Here comes a man on foot. Poor fellow, he does not know that behind that rock three or four men are waiting ; they have bad faces. One peeps out, sees that man coming, and whispers something to the other men. Down he comes, and just as he gets where they can see him they are out at him ; they beat him down, tear off his clothes, they get his money and away they go. Poor man, he is in a hard place. Oh, here comes somebody up from Jericho. He is a priest, as I know by his garments ; he will help him. Oh, he does not ; he looks at him and passes by. Here comes another man, a Levite, as I know by his garb. He is going up to Jerusalem, he will help him anyway. I see the Levite go up to him and look at him and pass by. Poor man, nobody will help him. Along comes another man, a Samaritan, but surely he won't do anything because this man is a Jew. He goes up to the helpless man and looks. Oh, the conditions of his wounds ! I see the Samaritan go to his saddle-bags and take out some oil and wine and some bandages ; he pours the oil and wine in and binds up his wounds. The man says, " Oh, thank you." I look at him and see him picking up the man and putting him on his own beast and leading the beast he walks by his side to an inn, where he takes him off, puts him to bed, and nurses him himself. The next day I see him talking to

the innkeeper ; the man is in bed still. He says to the innkeeper, " Keep him in bed ; I will be back soon ; here is some money," and off he goes. When you make your scholars in some such way see the scene, then you have got bed rock on which to build the application of the underlying principle.

Did you ever realize what a tremendous lot of modern benefactions find their prototype in the story of the Good Samaritan ? In the first place, this is an early instance of first aid to the injured. He got to work and helped this injured man before he took him anywhere. Then there is the first ambulance I know of ; it was not a modern ambulance, but it was the saddle on the donkey, the best ambulance that was to be had. Then, in the next place, I see a hospital ; he goes to the inn, puts him in bed, and treats him like a sick man ; the best hospital he could get. Then I see a nurse ; the man turns nurse himself. Then I see a collection, a Saturday and Sunday hospital collection ; only one man gives anything to that collection, and that is the Samaritan, who took up a collection from himself. That is fine. Almost anybody is glad to take up a collection from somebody else, but to take up a collection from one person and that yourself, that means great grace. To sum up, we have first aid to the injured, ambulance, hospital, private nurse and collection. That is beautiful. And the application of that to the twentieth century is not very hard to make.

Take, for example, another of these dramatic in-

cidents with which the Old and the New Testament are brimming over, the resuscitation of the Widow of Nain's son. Read the story always first, then sit down and shut your eyes and think, and picture, and paint, and, remember, when you have made a mistake, correct it and always try to make it a little more vivid.

There is the city of Nain, a walled town, as all the larger towns were then. The gate is open, and as I stand a little way off from the city I see a procession coming out slowly. Yes, it is a funeral. Many times a funeral has come out there. Four men are bearing a bier, after the manner of those times, not closed, but open, with the face of the dead man looking up to the sky.

But look there, if you please; there is another procession coming towards the city. I see one man leading that procession towards whom every one is looking. Here the two processions come, nearer, nearer to each other; they meet; they stop. Now those processions mass together in a compact body. How do I know that they mass together? Because that is exactly what would take place to-day. If a funeral procession were coming out of a city and another procession were to meet it and if some one should stop the bearers of the bier would they not set it down instantly? Then both ends of the procession would crowd up and press around the dead body. I see Christ there. Right next the bier is the mother crying; her friends are sympathetic. Then I see Christ

take the young man by the hand and say, "Arise." Oh, look ! He is sitting up. He is living, speaking. Then Christ says to the mother, "Take your boy," and to the boy He says, "There is your mother." Then what ? Then both processions join together ; the bier that they brought the boy out on dead goes into Nain empty ; the mother, the boy, Jesus' followers all rejoicing ; and both processions pour back into Nain. Will you look at them now ? It was not twenty minutes ago that the people of Nain saw them pass out to the graveyard, and now the boy is alive and walking arm in arm with his mother. How did it happen ? Everybody tells everybody else as they pass down the street, and the town of Nain rings with the story of the bringing back to life of the widow's only son.

When you have got those things vividly before your scholars, then you can begin on the application of all of this. What were those two processions ? Out of Nain goes the procession of death, towards Nain comes the procession headed by Him who is life. Death and life meet ; life wins ; the death procession marches back to Nain a procession of renewed life. That is what Christ says, "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly."

I don't suppose that young man staggered back to town, do you ? I don't suppose that he leaned on his mother and got some friend on the other side to hold him and tottered back to the city. Nay, verily. He went back to town vigorous, vital,

potent. There is a difference between a feeble life, the life of an invalid, and strong life, the life of an athlete, and Christ says that He came that men might have life and abundant life. That young man marches back into Nain with abundant life.

Oh, we all ought to be spiritual athletes, and not spiritual cripples. In every church half of the people are cripples; many others are staggering, feeble, and only a few are walking strongly. But Christ said, "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly."

Does this method strike you at all as feasible? Surely it must. But when you try it for the first time, you will find yourselves hampered; things will not go the way you would like to see them go. Never mind; stand by the work patiently; whip your mind into line; don't let it scatter fire all along the road; hold it down to its work steadily, and presently you will see that you are gaining more and more of facility in the line of revivifying events two thousand years old.

Take now one more illustration. You remember that in Capernaum at one time the crowd was so great that it says there was no room in the house where the Saviour was, no, not so much as about the door. The story then goes on to say briefly that four men came carrying a paralytic friend of theirs; they tried to get in by the door and could not. They then went up the stairway on the outside, such as oriental houses have, and broke up the

roof of the house and let their friend down on a mattress in front of the Master. The Master said, "Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven." A murmur arose of faultfinding. The Master then said to the crowd, "That you may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins, arise, take up thy bed and go unto thy house." The man rises, takes up his bed, and goes his way, and all men glorify God and say, "We have seen strange things to-day."

But, oh, how short that story is ! Now it is fair with our religious imagination to make this thing live, to be actors, so to speak, as well as spectators in that marvellous scene. Let me picture it for you now.

Since there was no room, not even so much as around the door, it follows that the house was packed ; otherwise more people would have come in. But every seat (on the floor, of course) was taken, and the Master sat on some little raised divan or platform. Men were standing by the door. How do I know that ? Because to-day, if there were an immense number trying to get in here, the doors would be open and you would see people standing as far as they could see or hear. That is what we would do to-day, isn't it ? Then that is what they did then. Outside of the door the crowd was still rather packed, and outside of the packed crowd there was a looser crowd, just as it is in great gatherings to-day. Inside they are not aware of what is going on outside, and when these

four friends come with their paralytic friend on a mattress, those inside are not conscious of what is taking place.

Now if you had a friend whom you wanted to get in before an undoubted healer, and you met a crowd like that outside, what would you do? I know what you would do. There are four of you. The spokesman would say to the crowd out there, "Friends, we want to get this man in, for he is a paralytic; we want to get him in to the Great Healer; won't you make a little room so that we can get through?" Then the looser crowd would step aside a little and the four men would move forward a few steps and strike the solid crowd, shoulder to shoulder. Do you think they could get through the crowd without effort? If you and I were there and wanted to get him in, what would we do next? I know what I would do. I would say, "See here, friends; we have got to get this man in there; make room there, make room; we are bound to get in, make room." Then I would begin to push. Of course, the paralytic would be shaken from side to side on his mattress while they were trying to push through. Then they got to the solid pack, and some one of the four said, "No use trying to get in here; it is impossible; let's pull out." So they retired, and set their friend down and wiped their perspiring brows. I don't know, but probably three of the four said, "No use trying it to-day, better put it off." But some one of those four said, "I am not going to

put it off ; I am going to get him in, see ? ” “ How will you get him in ? ” “ Break up the roof. ” “ Who will pay the bill ? ” “ I will pay the bill. ” When a man is in dead earnest he is willing to pay the bill, and I have generally noticed that where there is one man willing to pay the bill, there are three that are willing he should. The resolute man is like the boy to whom somebody said, “ How much do you weigh ? ” He answered, “ I weigh eighty pounds, but when I am dead in earnest I weigh a ton. ” So up to the roof they go. Now it was customary for people to walk on the roof in those lands, and when those inside who did not know anything about what was going on outside as yet, heard the walking on the roof it did not bother them because that was customary. But by and by however they hear, crack, crack, crack, as the roof was being broken up. Now they look up. Certainly if the master of the house was inside he must have looked up and said, “ Well, somebody has got some nerve. ” Do you suppose that the Master kept on talking ? Certainly not, because everybody was looking up to see what was happening there. If you thought this roof was being torn up would you look at me ? Surely not. So there is silence. Everybody looking up. What do they see ? A wide hole, four-square, and ropes put across, and they exclaim, “ Why, they are letting down a sick man ; ” and down he comes. They couldn't make room before that for any more, but when he was coming down on their heads they

pushed back and back, and down he came at the feet of the Master.

What are these people on the outskirts of the room doing? If I were on this platform, and a man were on the floor here whom you couldn't see, but who you thought was going to be healed, what would the people on the outskirts of the room do? Why, you would instantly stand on your feet to see.

(Here I pause to say that some one of those four friends had far better brains than most teachers have in modern times, because he found out in what room the Master was and where He sat, and he opened the hole in the roof so that when the sick man came down, he came down right in front of the Master. If those people had been as intelligent as some Sunday-school people I know in New York, they would have opened the hole away over in the corner of the roof somewhere and let the man down in a dark closet. What we want is not only consecration, but brains. Consecration is good, but without common sense we sometimes go astray.)

Well, everybody looks at the Master; He is the centre of attention. What is He going to do? Oh, for a photograph of those faces as they look intently at Him to hear what He will say. He says something, and instantly most of the faces change. They have been filled with curiosity; now they change and are filled with criticism and bitter feeling, "Who is this who speaketh blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God only?"

And a large part of the crowd turns against the Master. Now He is going to speak again, and so there is silence. He looks down at the poor man ; He looks up at them, and says, "That you may know that the Son of Man hath authority on earth to forgive sins, arise, take up thy couch, and go."

Oh, but all of this time you have forgotten all about his four friends. Where were those friends ; what were those four doing who had brought him there with so much toil and labour ? What would you have done if you had gotten a man up on the roof, then broken the roof open, and then let him down in the presence of some great healer in the expectation that he would be healed ? Would you have gone off and sat down on the edge of the roof and whistled a tune ? Surely not. What you would have done would have been simply this (here the speaker lay down on platform and looked over the edge). If you had looked up there you would have seen four faces on the edges of the opening, peering down with intensest interest.

Now, then, the Master has said, "Take up thy couch and go thy way." At once the man takes up his mattress, tiptoes his way down the room and goes out. Look up ; are those faces there now ? Oh, no. How do I know they are not there ? Because if I had been there and seen my friend going away, do you think I would have stayed there looking at nothing ? They have disappeared, leaped down the stairs and are waiting at the door. Now he comes out. What under the circumstances

would you have done? (You see, I am applying the principle that men under similar circumstances always act in the same way.) Why, of course, you would have embraced him after the Eastern manner. What would he have done? Thrown down his mattress at once so as to embrace them, kiss them on one cheek and then on the other. What is the crowd doing? They are gathering around to look at that man whom they have seen a few moments ago carried up the stairs with difficulty, now walking away like an athlete.

Oh, these things are wonderful when once you see them, and the only way to see them is to stop and paint and paint and paint, until suddenly they become living pictures, endowed with vitality.

All of a sudden the man says, "I thank you, boys; but I must be off to my family;" and he picks up his mattress and off he goes. His family see him and they say, "Well, how did it happen?" And whenever that man afterwards speaks of the Master he says, "Yes, they carried me to Him helpless, and I walked away as well as ever."

Now you see what I mean by the religious use of the imagination. You can apply this, friend teacher, to any moving scene in the Old or New Testament, if you will only be patient, and slowly reproduce a picture. Be careful not to make the details too minute, or you will weary your scholars; but make it living, and then, having impressed the basic facts, deduce from them the application.

See what the application here, for example, with

those five men is. In the first place, in all your woe, go to the Master ; His power is endless. Secondly, if you cannot get to the Master by yourself alone, get some spiritual friend to help you along. Sometimes a combination in prayer, like the combination of effort on the part of these four, will accomplish that which one alone cannot accomplish. One man could not have brought that man to the Master, but four did. United prayer like that of Nehemiah and his friends, united effort like that of these four men, will accomplish wonders and produce spiritual miracles. Oh, for a little of this wonderful magic touch of the imagination !

I will close now by giving you a wonderful bit of imaginative description that I heard Dr. Jowett use in England a year ago. The story he illustrated was the coming of the leper to the Master. He, standing in front of the Master, said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Here, said the Doctor, is the Master ; in front of Him is the leper, absolutely "impossible." The leper was impossible from the standpoint of the family. The moment his wife saw that white spot with the hair in it white, she said, "Good-bye, out." He was impossible, as he stood before the Master, from the standpoint of social life. Some men, unhappy in their homes, go to a sister or a relative ; this man could not. If he went to a brother, or even to his mother, and said, "I cannot live at home, take me in," the moment they saw his disease, they said, "Go, impossible." This man standing in front of

the Saviour was impossible from a business standpoint. He could not go to any man and say, "Won't you hire me, please?" The moment that man saw the spot he would exclaim, "Get you gone." He could not open a little store and so gain a living, for the moment the first customer saw that spot, that would be the end of it. This man standing face to face with the Master was impossible from the medical standpoint. If he went to the best doctor in the community and said, "Doctor, will you look and see if you can do any thing for me?" the doctor would say, "Get out of this office; don't come near it; you are unclean." This man standing face to face with the Master was impossible from a religious standpoint. Any beggar might go to the temple in Jerusalem if he was a Jew, but this man, if he came to the door of the temple and a priest saw the spot, would hear the command, "Unclean, get out of the temple; don't come into the temple lest you defile it." Here, then, are the Master and this bundle of impossibilities face to face. And this man did not deny it; he simply brought his bundle of impossibilities to Jesus and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst," and Jesus said, "I will."

Is it not grand, to make a picture like that? Is not that worth a great deal of toil and labour and study? I will never forget the picture as he painted it so vividly. But then the Doctor turned on the congregation and said, "You sinner, you are impossible; don't say it was your environment; don't say

it was your bringing up ; you are impossible ; you covetous man, you are impossible ; you lecherous man, you are impossible ; you vain woman, you are impossible ; you are all impossible ; the only thing for you to do is what that man did ; bring your impossibilities to Him and say, ' Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst,' and He will say, ' I will.' "

Now if I have aroused you students and teachers at all to make use of this God-given faculty, to cultivate it, to chasten it, to stimulate it so that you can make more vivid the stories which you bring Sunday after Sunday to your class, then I have accomplished that for which I thank God, and for which your scholars will be boundlessly grateful.

IX

THE TEACHER'S GRAND QUARTET

WE all like the best things, and any one who is satisfied with less than the best, provided the best be obtainable, is delinquent.

When I was a boy, I was taking at one time music and painting lessons simultaneously. If at any time my music master pushed me hard, so that I neglected for a week my painting, when I came to the painting master he would say, "What kind of a daub is this? What have you been doing this week? This is poor work." If I then replied, "The music master pushed me hard this week and I put rather too much time on that and had to neglect my painting," the painting master said, "What is music? Take your violin and play a tune and it is finished; whereas, if you paint a picture, frame it and hang it up, it is a joy forever. Young man, pay especial attention to painting." If, then, I paid particular attention to my painting and neglected my music, when my music master arrived he said, "What kind of a performance is this? What are you doing?" If I said, "My painting master pushed me this week rather hard," he would reply,

“Painting? What is painting? It is a dead thing. But take your violin and play and you make people weep for joy. Pay attention to your music.” I suppose if I had taken lessons in sculpture at the same time, and neglected sculpture for music or painting, the teacher would have said, “What are you doing? Music is insignificant, painting is flat. But when you chisel a statue in marble, you have got a thing that only lacks the breath of life to make it live. Young man, pay attention to sculpture.”

Each one from his standpoint is right, because to the musician melody, harmony and tone are the only things; to the painter colour; whereas the sculptor looks only on form and figure.

There are many teachers who get discouraged in their work because they do not realize that in our work of Sunday-school teaching we have a quartet of unsurpassed excellence. To this quartet I want to call your careful and joyous attention.

The first of these things is the material in which we work. We work in human nature. Five times in the first chapter of Genesis we are told that God saw the work of His hands and it was good. The sixth time, after man arrived, we are told that “God saw that it was very good.” Now of all humanity the most promising, the most delightful thing, is the child. Most of us will teach children up to their middle adolescent years. Therefore, all I shall say to-night deals with this matter of the budding child, before it reaches maturity,

after which character becomes consolidated and crystallized.

When you come to the study of child nature, you come to one of the most fascinating things that possibly can engage your attention; for these children are very bewitching. There is no better material to work on than the material of child nature. Consider now some of these extraordinary excellencies that the child possesses by the very virtue of its childhood.

To begin with, all children are plastic. By plastic, I mean that they are like soft clay. We adults are not like soft clay, we are like clay that has been baked and is hard. If you are going to change baked clay, you have got to break it. It is hard to teach an old dog new tricks. When a man is thirty or forty, he has crystallized, and it is hard to change him. But a child is like soft clay in our hands and can be moulded for his weal or for his woe, according to the influences under which the child falls. If you do not believe that childhood is plastic, take a good Sunday-school class of boys, and put into that class one evil-minded boy and watch him begin to mould the other boys. If you do not believe that the child is plastic, go to the academy of the streets of our cities and see how fast the child learns all things, not for up-building, but for down-tearing. With childhood you can do almost anything, by the grace of God, for its uplift, for its moulding into beautiful, Christlike characteristics. That is one of our great en-

couragements, that we have got them just at the period when every effort for good is better repaid than it is in later years.

Another characteristic of childhood is that it is mercurial. Like the mercury in the thermometer, it is down, down, up, up. This is a trying characteristic of childhood, undoubtedly, but it must be reckoned with. We make a great mistake in forgetting this. We have an idea that children are so built that they can sit still and have us talk to them for half an hour without wriggling. Now a child is not made that way. It is torment for a child to sit still. You can sit still for half an hour, but a child cannot. We have got, therefore, to adapt our teaching to this mercurial nature of children.

These children, by reason of their mercurial nature, can do two or three things at the same time, and do them all pretty well, which is more than some of us can do. It used to be my habit while I was superintendent of the Sunday-school of the church to which I ministered, when I saw a peculiarly difficult lesson approaching to preach five or six weeks ahead on that lesson. I was doing that one Sunday when I noticed a restless boy sitting by his teacher's side. When I had finished the service she came up and said, "What do you think Charlie did while you were preaching?" I said, "I don't know." She replied, "He had a gutta-percha watch-chain and he took every link apart and put it together again while you were

preaching; I am discouraged." I said, "I am sorry, but I can't help it." Six weeks afterwards we came to the same lesson, and to her surprise Charlie knew it well. She said, "Charlie, I am glad you studied your lesson." He answered, "I didn't study it." Then she said, "How did you know it so well?" "Oh," he said, "old Schauffler preached on it six weeks ago." He was mercurial enough to listen to me, attend to the watch-chain and leap back to me again. We must adapt our teaching, therefore, to that peculiar phase of child nature. Change it, we cannot; adapt ourselves to it, we can.

Another characteristic of child nature is that it is swift. That is one trouble, that children are so swift and we are so slow. One time I saw a notice on a roundhouse of a railroad company which said, "No engineer is allowed to take his locomotive out of this roundhouse with less than one hundred and twenty pounds of steam on." I thought, "That is fine, and I will put up a notice in our Sunday-school that no teacher will be allowed to go to her class with less than one hundred and twenty pounds of steam on." The trouble is that the boys go there with their boilers bursting, and you get there with your boiler lukewarm, and then you expect to pull that train. Nay, verily. The boy whose boiler is full will pull the train. Imagine this situation in the class. A Wild West show has been around and some of the boys have been to it. The Sunday-school lesson is "Jehoshaphat helped by God."

They don't care about Jehoshaphat; they don't know who he was; they don't care whether he was helped by God or not, but they are full of the Wild West show and they all arrive early. The teacher arrives full of Jehoshaphat and she arrives late, and one of the boys is already teaching the class a lesson on Buffalo Bill and he is doing it well. That is because he has got one hundred and twenty pounds of steam on, and the boy who comes early with that kind of a boiler will carry the whole train with him. That makes some teachers so reluctant to go to their classes. It is to them a kind of a bore, and they say, "Oh, I have got to go to that class again." Now wherever a teacher says, "Oh, I have got to go to that class," you may be sure that the class says, "Oh, here comes that teacher." It is a poor rule that does not work both ways.

This swiftness of our scholars is a thing peculiar to America. I have seen Sunday-school scholars in four continents, and nowhere can they match that swiftness of mental processes which we find here. A Boston lady told me one day of a Boston boy in the public school who was asked to give the parts of the verb "go"; he promptly said, "Go, went, got there." I took that down to New York and told it to my brother, who is one of the superintendents of public schools in New York, and he said, "Oh, that's nothing; a New York grammar-school boy was asked to compare the adjective 'sick,' and he said, 'Sick, worse, dead.'"

Prof. George Adam Smith told me the following story of a New Haven professor of psychology, whose wont it was to pounce on some child and ask it a ridiculous question to see how long it took the child to pull itself together and give some kind of an answer. One day on the streets of New Haven, he pounced on a newsboy and said, "Sonny, what time is it by your nose?" The newsboy promptly said, "Mine ain't running; is yours?" You see how swift these children are, and the teacher must accelerate her speed in order to keep up with the amazing rapidity of her scholars. But if we do, then we lead them, for they love swift people, and if we lead them in that way they will follow willingly.

Another characteristic of childhood is that it is superbly imaginative. Oh, how these children love to make believe. They live in an imaginary world, and we live in the prosaic world. If we only use our imagination right, we can picture to them Biblical scenes and make vivid to them Biblical parables, so that they are fairly fascinated with the story. Their imaginations are fairly hungering for food and if we have nothing to present to them, no imaginative work, we lose them.

The imagination of some of these children is really bewitching. I heard, for example, of a child who was eating pancakes at breakfast. She cut a little piece and a big piece. Then she called the little piece baby and the big piece mama, and eating the little piece she said, "Don't cry, baby;

mama is coming directly." Is not that charming? A child that can imagine such a fascinating thing as that can be led by the teacher by the very power of its imagination, so that teacher and scholar shall be enormously stimulated and gratified. Of course, we know by experience that these children are not, all of them, angels. Some of them are rather trying. I heard a man in the "Men and Religion Movement" make a statement in public with which I failed to agree. He said, pointblank, "There are no bad boys." This is not true. There are some boys who naturally are depraved and degenerate. Of course, we have our troubles with these children, but so do public school teachers. The papers often make fun of us Sunday-school teachers because of the ridiculous answers we get to some of our questions, and with all of that I agree. But if any public school teacher will show me any stupid or absurd answer of a Sunday-school scholar, I will match it at once with a ridiculous answer in the public schools. Lately, after having studied English history a little, some scholars were asked to write an essay on Henry the Eighth, and one of the children wrote, "Henry the Eighth married a wife and didn't like her, and put her away, and he married a second and a third and a fourth and a fifth and a sixth, and out of that sprang the Church of England." Another boy, writing on Lincoln, said, "Abraham Lincoln was born on a very cold February day in a small log cabin which he helped his father build."

Now these are not imaginary things I am telling you ; these are actual facts. My brother, who used to bring me sundry tidbits out of the public schools, told me that in a grammar-school after a lecture on the human body, the class was asked to write a composition and one boy wrote as follows : "The human body is composed of three parts, the head, thorax and bowels ; the head is that with which we think ; the thorax has the heart, lungs and liver ; the bowels are five, a e i o u and sometimes w and y."

Absurd things ? Yes ; but that is the way the child mind works ; it misapprehends, both in public school and Sunday-school. So we ought not to be any more discouraged in our work than the public school teachers are in theirs. Indeed, we ought to be less discouraged, because the public school teachers have their scholars five days a week and five hours in the day, and we have our scholars one day in the week and thirty minutes for the lesson. Under these conditions I say it is wonderful to see what results we do get.

These scholars of ours are affectionate. Every child, unless it is blasé, is affectionate. Childhood is like a creeper that wants something to twine around, and if the teacher is in the right attitude towards the child, the child will twine around the teacher and cling closely to the one it loves. This affection of the child for the teacher may be admirably used by the teacher to win the child away from the base, to lead the child up to that which is

noble, to win the child away from the visible to the invisible, to lead the child from love for the teacher to love for the teacher's Saviour.

I am sorry for any teacher whose scholars do not love her. It simply shows that you are not lovable, that is all. Resign, if you cannot love your scholars; but if you can love your scholars, hold on, for, after all, the power of the Sunday-school teacher is more a power of the heart than of the head. I am not one of those who depreciate the head. I would have the teachers prepare themselves with the utmost conscientiousness so they will know what to teach. Nevertheless, the dominant power in Sunday-school work is affection and not intellect. When, however, you combine affection and intellect, then you have a prodigious force, and you can bring your scholars step by step from that which is merely human up to that which is superbly divine.

These scholars of ours have another characteristic. They are heroic. We oftentimes make a mistake through thinking that one must grow to adult years before one can be a hero or a heroine. That is a great blunder. I have known children as heroic in their stand for the right as any adults whom I have ever met. When a child sees its duty and is rightly taught, it will often go ahead and do its duty, irrespective of its environment, even more steadily than a man will. After we grow to be adults, all kind of ulterior considerations come in. We say, "This is the line of duty, but how will it affect my interests? What will people say of me if I launch

out on this career ? How will it affect my friends ? ” All manner of selfish considerations come in to influence us, not always victoriously, but often powerfully. The tendency of the child, if it sees its line of duty, is to follow it like the flight of an arrow, regardless of consequences. Many a Sunday-school teacher will bear witness to this superb characteristic of childhood, that sees, and dares and does.

Oh, we so often underestimate the potentiality of these children. We are thinking of them in a derogatory kind of way only too frequently. An elder in a Scotch church, being absent from communion service, and on Monday meeting another elder who had been to communion service said to him, “ Did any one unite with the church yesterday on confession ? ” The answer was, “ No, nobody but wee Bobby Moffatt.” Oh, nobody but wee Bobby Moffatt ! But what has Africa got to say about “ wee Bobby Moffatt ” and his successor, Livingstone ? What has Africa got to say about his breaking open that continent and endeavouring to bring in Christ's light ? To the elder he was only “ wee Bobby Moffatt ” ; to God he was the pioneer in the opening of that dark continent.

You see, then, what superb material we have right under our hands, at the formative period, just when imagination, when swiftness of thought, when that profound affection of the child prompts it to be influenced by us and to follow our lead, with absolute trust, and with a loyalty unsurpassed.

That, then, is the first of these four grand things.

The second is the best tool. We all like good tools. A good workman can work well with a poor tool, and a poor workman cannot work well with anything, but, nevertheless, a good workman can work better if he can get a good tool. The tool that we have with which to shape this child nature is the Word of God, adapted admirably to all the child's needs. Not that all the Word of God is equally adapted to childhood. No one would claim that. But there are multitudes of passages in the Word of God which fit a child's nature as a key fits a lock. Have you ever realized how the historical parts of the Bible are written from the biographical standpoint? If you take the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, you have covered thirty-nine chapters of Genesis, all biographical, and if you take the life of Moses, you have covered the rest of the Pentateuch. If you take the life of David, you have covered a large part of Kings. If you take the lives of Christ, Paul, Peter, you have covered practically the whole of the New Testament. Children like to know what people did, they like to be introduced to the great men and the great women of the centuries that lie behind us. What grander story is there, for example, than the story of David and Jonathan, so superbly told? What more beautiful story than the friendship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law as given in the book of Ruth? The model mother-in-law of all millenniums is Naomi, and the model daughter-in-law of the same millenniums is Ruth.

Not in Richmond, not in any town of New England, can you find any more superb examples of what mother-in-law and daughter-in-law should be to each other. There is no more superb poetry than the words of Ruth :

“Intreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee : for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God :

“Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried : Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.”

That is superb.

Passing along, what grander story is there than that of Joseph, who in adversity was loyal to the truth and in prosperity never forsook the God of his fathers ? The days of bitter adversity and the days of wonderful prosperity were met by that man in each case victoriously.

There is no book in all the world which a teacher can teach year after year and not be weary of, excepting only this Book. I have been a teacher of a Bible class of teachers in New York for thirty-four years. Am I weary of it ? Never. Have we exhausted it ? We have not begun to get at it even yet. And as the years pass by, the Book opens up more and more, and you see how it is fitted to the human heart, how it fills the deepest human wants, how it arouses the human conscience,

how it stimulates human effort, how it sets before you truth abstractly and concretely in the examples of the noble men and women of days gone by. So here, for the child that we wish to influence and shape, we have a tool admirably adapted for exactly the work we want to carry out.

The third of those grand things is our Helper. We may well say, as we face a class of boys or girls, "Who is sufficient for these things?" We sit before that class, and each one of them is a sovereign, sitting in his castle, with his own free will. Challenge all of the professors of all the theological seminaries to come and bend the will of a perverse boy. Without divine aid they shall fail utterly, because that boy sits inside a sovereign, hearing all of their pleas, all of their arguments, and replying, "I won't." There is no power on earth that is merely human that can bend that boy's will. Sovereign he remains, because of this endowment of free agency. We need, therefore, in this grand but most difficult task of shaping character, to have a helper who is superhuman, and that is exactly what we have. The Divine Spirit is willing to be a co-worker with every single Sunday-school teacher in the world. It is His work to lift up before the scholar, through us, the things of Christ; it is His work to tame the human will and make it willing in the day of His power. I believe myself that the Holy Spirit is always aching to act with the teacher in her class.

Many teachers go to their classes almost without

the consciousness that there is a Holy Spirit, or that He is willing to guide them in their study, and in their speech. They run in their own strength. Whoever runs in his own strength runs without tidings, and without power. When the Holy Spirit is entreated, then that teacher goes into the class, and by virtue of the Holy Spirit's aid an influence is exerted so that hearts are opened and wills subdued. There are many ministers, I fear, who go into the pulpit without the Holy Spirit, and they come out without the Holy Spirit, too. It is not your great sermon, it is not your great oratory that is to accomplish anything. No; our sufficiency is through Him. How could Mr. Moody, illiterate as he was, swing thousands and thousands and bring them by God's grace into the kingdom? Only by the power of the Spirit of the Living God. How does Billy Sunday, with whose methods some of us disagree, nevertheless, by God's grace, win so many from low lives to high lives, from lawlessness to lawfulness? The secret of it all is dependence on the Spirit of the Living God, without whom nothing can be accomplished, and with whom nothing need fail.

I would, therefore, earnestly urge that all who go into the pulpit, all who go into the class-room, realize that they are absolutely powerless unless Divine Power flows through them, and that then there is no opposition that can successfully resist this divine influence.

See, then, where we stand—the best material,

childhood; the best tool, the Word of the Living God; the best helper, the Divine Spirit. This explains how very ignorant teachers, leaning on the Holy Spirit's aid, succeed where highly intellectual teachers, leaning on their own strength, oftentimes fail. In my school one of my two most successful teachers in winning souls for Christ was a man who had lived his lifetime before the mast, quite ignorant, but filled with Power Divine. Every one of his scholars came to the Saviour and every one joined the church. Then he came to me and he said, "I am an ignorant man; these children have found the Saviour; take them away from me; give them to some one better instructed than I, and give me out of the primary class another set; maybe I can lead them to Christ." He was a man saturated with prayer and convinced of his dependence on the Divine Spirit. I gave him another class, and every one of those found the Saviour and every one joined the church.

This brings us to the fourth of these best things, and that is the best aim in the world. There are various aims that we can have in the education of those under our care. The college coach aims at superb development for the baseball or the football team. What he wants is, primarily, physical capability and a superb body under the government of a well-trained mind. At the same time, in these days of excessive athletics, I oftentimes think of that passage of Scripture which says that the Lord delighteth not in the legs of a man. The football

crowd deals in the legs of a man, but I never forget that the rear battery of a donkey can kick harder than any football player I ever heard of. (Nevertheless, I do not depreciate football, though I sometimes think that it is one of those things which has been driven to excess.)

There are others who aim at the higher development of youth through the intellect. The public school teacher, or college professor aims at the development of the mind, which is surely higher than anything physical, because it is through the intellect that we stand high above the most superb animal in the world. The Sunday-school has no physical aim except secondarily; nor has it an intellectual aim except secondarily. We are not satisfied if we instruct our scholars only in Old and New Testament geography; we cannot consider our work well done if we impart only a knowledge of Old Testament times and environment, or of New Testament times under the Roman Empire. All of this is a legitimate subject to work on, but is only subsidiary; our work is higher than this, and reaches deeper than this. That Sunday-school teacher who is satisfied because he has made his scholars understand the lesson as a lesson, historically or geographically, comes far short of his duty and privilege.

What, then, is the supreme aim of all right-minded Sunday-school teachers? It is twofold. First, the conversion of the scholar to Christ. Call it by any name you like, I care not; the reality is

the thing ; "Ye must be born again." I am not of those who claim that a child must have a dramatic experience in conversion, such as Jerry McAuley had, or Dave Ranney, or S. S. Hadley. A child has not run any such course as those men and it is foolish to talk of a child having such an experience. Nevertheless, the fact is that in its own way the child has got to trust the Saviour, accept Him as Master and follow Him as leader.

It would be most interesting if, right here and now, we could find what our experiences were in coming to Christ. The experience of no two of us would be exactly alike. I came to Christ at about fourteen years of age, with no extra preaching, no revival services, nothing at all but God and I. I came to Christ quietly in my own room, on my knees. I know the place, I know the time, I know the experience full well when my boy heart surrendered.

Now our chance of reaching that aim (always by divine grace, remember) is enormously better in childhood than in adult years. All statistics show that if a boy, or a girl, passes adolescence, unconverted, the chances are very small that they ever will surrender themselves to Christ and follow Him. As the years pass the chances grow less and less. Enormously the majority of those who are church members will testify that they found Christ before they were fifteen years old. I have tested this again and again, but, for your sakes, I am going to test it now, and I am going to ask all of you

who recognize that you found Christ at or before fifteen years of age please to stand now. (Nearly all rise.) You see where we stand. What an enormous majority of those here were child-Christians. And there is our joy, and our hope, that we have got these children just at this plastic period, when divine influences are more easily followed and divine impressions are more easily made.

That, then, is our first aim, the bringing of the scholar to Christ, his conversion, regeneration—I care not what your nomenclature is, so long as the actuality is there.

Now many teachers make this mistake, that when the scholar has united with the church they feel like washing their hands and saying, “My duty is done.” Oh, no; your duty has only begun along another line; it has been bringing the child to the Saviour, henceforth it is to train the child up in the Saviour’s love and service. So, then, there comes the second aim of the teacher, which is growth in grace, or Christian culture. The aim of our teaching changes at once when the scholar makes the great surrender. There had been no spiritual life; it was imparted; now it must be fostered, stimulated, brought to proper and symmetrical proportions; and there the teacher’s work, though changing, remains, nevertheless, along the same line of Christian fullness of character.

See, friends, what a wonderful thing this is. Our aim with these scholars is to make them reproductions of Christ in character. “Be ye therefore per-

fect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." That is our aim. So when they are born into the kingdom, it is ours by divine grace to be God's tools to develop in them this Christian life, so that the old things shall pass away, so that the old man shall be put off like an old, moth-eaten garment, so that the new man shall be put on. A grander aim than that no man on earth, no angel in Heaven, could desire, because grander than perfectness as our Father in Heaven is perfect, there is nothing in the wide world.

Teacher, is not your privilege beyond speech? Four divine things making this quartet, which, if rightly handled, shall make divine music. There is God's child, perverted and wayward more or less, I know, but none the less God's child; there is God's Book; there is God's Divine Spirit to help me use that Book as a tool for that divine child; there is the divine aim and object, the imparting and the development of the divine character. Four divine things, and all at my disposal, all by divine help brought under my control more or less. Could any calling be grander, more precious, or more worthy of being sought after by any one on earth than the calling of Sunday-school teacher? As teachers, we strike into the very heart of our children's lives, reach the rising generation so that the families that are to be, are going to be more divinely instructed than the families that now are. We are co-working with Christ to win man back to loyalty to God, to win man away from that which

is base and low to that which is high, to win men away from eternal death to eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. These things form the grand quartet for the teacher. For the right use of all of these, let us individually look to Him who is willing to guide all His people with the Divine Spirit of Truth, without whom, I must repeat, all is vain, but with whom there shall be signal success in winning our scholars for Christ and building them up into Christlike living and service.

X

THE TEACHER'S ELEVEN HELPERS

EVERY Sunday-school superintendent who is capable will sooner or later have a good school. However disorganized the school may be when he takes it, he will work cosmos out of chaos in due time. Every capable teacher, whatever may be the class passed over to him or her, will sooner or later have a well-managed class because the teacher can by patience, perseverance and prayer largely overcome the difficulties that any class presents. If the teacher is fortunate enough to have a good superintendent, then teacher and superintendent work in close coöperation, and school-work and class-work rapidly attain a fine development.

I am talking this morning, however, about that particular teacher who, even independently of the superintendent, can make admirable use of the eleven helpers that God has given.

Every teacher has *two eyes*. I have seen teachers who you would think were blind, because they did not seem to see. Every superintendent who notices finds teachers who are oblivious to disorder in the class. The boys may be cutting up didos but the teacher keeps on the even tenor of her way and notices nothing. There are teachers in primary

departments who never notice whether the room is well arranged, whether the scholars are well seated, whether they are comfortable or uncomfortable. It is amazing to see how they do not see. Unless your scholars are comfortable it is impossible for you to teach them. I don't care how clever the teacher is, if you are sitting on the sharp end of a tack he may work in vain until that tack is extracted. So while the scholar is uncomfortable or the air in the room is exhausted, the teacher's labour is futile.

Two eyes—given to see. I once had in my school two blind teachers, but what they lacked in physical vision they made up by the use of ear-gate. One of them was very shrewd. He taught a girls' class. I had said in the teachers' meeting one day that I needed a teacher very much for a trying boys' class. At the close of the meeting he came up and said: "I will take it." I replied: "Why, you are blind." "Never mind," he answered, "I will take it." I gave him the class and moved it up to the front in the school, so as to be directly under my supervision. This is what happened the very first Sunday. The seats were all cushioned and the class was crowded. As we arose to sing one boy threw his hymn-book on the cushioned seat. The blind teacher heard it. He stooped down, picked up the book and gave it to the scholar with a smile. Just at that moment the boy's eye caught mine and he smiled in a kind of shamefaced way. The blind teacher had been too much for

the boy with two eyes. He took his book, opened it and sang like an angel. What the teacher could not see the teacher could hear and thus he remedied the difficulty with that one boy and thereby quelled a sort of quiet insubordination in the class.

Every teacher has *two ears*. There are many teachers who seem to act as if they were stone-deaf, for they never give their scholars a chance to say anything, they never hear what is announced from the platform and if a platform review of the lesson goes on, they pay little attention. Ears are given to hear. We must be good listeners as well as good talkers. A mere lecturer is out of place in a class of boys or girls. In the adult class it may be that pure lecturing may pass, but with the younger ones—never. There has got to be such teaching as will lead the scholars to ask questions and the teacher must answer them. There must be such teaching as will lead the teacher to ask questions and listen to the replies. That particular line of work in the class I shall discuss later on more fully.

Ears are given to hear with, and if we listen to our scholars' troubles sympathetically, if we hear their temptations pityingly, it goes to show that we enter into their lives. Just as we listen, just in that proportion is the scholar won. We ought, therefore, to use our ears. I noticed when I was a superintendent that some teachers paid no attention when I was giving an announcement from the platform. I suppose that is always so with all congregations. There are always some in all congrega-

tions who do not hear aright. Even here in this rather extraordinarily intellectual congregation a man came up to me and said: "Did I understand you to say that that tablet that you showed us was an imitation?" Now, I had said distinctly that it was genuine. Where were that man's ears? If there is a notice, harken. If there is a platform review, harken. Whatever the superintendent has to say, instantly harken, because it is supposed that what he says is worth hearing.

Every teacher has *two feet*. Feet are made to go with. The first thing a teacher ought to do is to go to the teachers' meeting, if there be one; to Sunday-school, always; and in any case, promptly. These late-comers make one sometimes a little vexed. The only grace they develop is the grace of patience, and sometimes they almost exhaust that.

But the teacher's feet are given to travel with. Visitation is one of the tremendous elements of power in the teacher's work. Every teacher ought to visit the scholar in the home, not once or twice, but fairly steadily. You can learn in the home surroundings your scholar's daily environment. That will help you when you meet the scholar face to face. You see the influence there. You breathe the mysterious atmosphere of the home. This helps you to be patient, to better adapt the truth to the need of each particular scholar.

One day, the morning after Christmas, I visited the home of two of my scholars. The father was a tailor. As soon as I entered he turned his back on

me and never turned around again. I knew at once there was trouble. I did my best but failed to find out what the trouble was. When I said good-bye the mother followed me out into the hall and said : "Last night when the children got home from the Christmas tree with their presents, he was surly with drink, and he snatched their presents from them and shoved them into the stove, so the children are broken-hearted."

See—that opened the door to me to know the environment of these poor children, to sympathize with them, to greet them with a little more of tenderness and kindness when next they came to Sunday-school.

I had a young woman in a Bible class who was sometimes troubled very much with nervousness. I called at the house and the father was there, who also happened to be a tailor. When he was sober he was sensible ; when he was in his cups he was insufferable. That day he was in his cups and nothing suited him. He was as cross as two sticks. He made me as nervous as a witch. Then I knew why that young woman was nervous—driven to pieces by the incessant faultfinding spirit of her own father.

Visiting a home once where a primary scholar in my school lived, I was talking with the mother about the bringing up of her little child. One of the questions I asked her was, "Have you taught the child to pray?"

"Oh ! certainly," she said. "Mary, kneel down

and say your prayers." On that the little five-year-old child knelt down in the middle of the room, and folding her hands, said :

"O Thou with the strength of an earthly father, and with more than the tenderness of an earthly mother, look down upon us Thy sinful creatures, we beseech Thee, and vouchsafe unto us Thy benediction and grace. Amen."

What a revelation that was to me, as Sunday-school superintendent, of the need of that child for better instruction along the line of prayer. What could a five-year-old understand of the words "vouchsafe" or "benediction"?

Not only should our feet take us to the homes of the scholars, but if they be in business, to their place of business. If your scholars are in the factory or in the shop, you will find it hard to find them in the daytime at home, but in the factory or shop you can catch them. Their employers are glad to have the teachers visit their employees. I have never found it otherwise. In that way you find their environment in business hours. It does not take long, and if you are wise, you will not make long visits to the girl in the department or candy store. But even a short visit touches the heart.

My wife had a large class of young women who worked. One of them, for example, worked for Huyler's, on Broadway, where ladies bought dyspepsia at ten cents a glass. She was cashier, and sometimes there would be a line of three or more waiting their chance to pay. Of course, there

was no opportunity for much talking, but my wife would simply go in and take a rose or pink, and leaning over the shoulders of the ladies say: "Mary, how are you?" and give her the flower. Wouldn't Mary be more sure to be at Sunday-school on the next Sunday than if her teacher had not done this? My wife knew all of her scholars in their homes and working places.

I was at the funeral one day, in New York, of a men's Bible class teacher. Around that coffin were ninety men. His class numbered one hundred, and they said the way he got his tremendous grip on that class was that he knew every one of them in their homes and in their places of business. That is the blessed advantage of having two good feet wherewith to visit in home and in business place.

Every teacher has *two hands*. See; you are not so poverty-stricken as you thought. And these hands are most valuable helpers. With your hands, for example, you can do blackboard work if you have a class-room by yourself. You can do pad-work if you have to meet where other classes surround you. You can use your hands for correspondence. Many of these scholars of ours get few letters, especially those in the tenement sections of the town, and a letter coming to the tenement-house boy or girl is quite an event. But never write to them on a postal card in the tenement-house district, for if they live on the top floor, your card is read all the way up and when it reaches the top it is public property. Send a stamped letter,

sealed. Then what the scholar gets is private property.

There are often things we would like to say that we cannot say in the class, but a letter gives us the opportunity. A letter is always read by a Sunday-school scholar and frequently more than once. A letter makes the scholar realize that the teacher thinks of her or him away from the class, that the scholar is on the teacher's heart. I have known teachers who wrote letters to their scholars regularly. In their vacation when scholar and teacher are away, they secured the address of the scholar, and always regularly there came the letter from the teacher with a remark or two about the lesson for the following Sunday. Do you wonder that they clung to her as with hooks of steel?

Remember birthday letters. It is a charming thing to send a scholar: "Many happy returns of your birthday." Enclose a picture card. If in the fall, put in some autumn leaves. If abroad, put in some touching memento. It is not the price of the gift that counts. It is the heart in it. The scholars will rally around the teacher who remembers them like this most loyally.

See—these other things your hands can do. If you go to visit a sick scholar (which is an especially good time to visit), your hands can take some little delicacy, or carry a small bouquet of flowers. Your hands can smooth the pillow. Your hands can hold the hand of the sick boy or girl lying on the bed, fever-stricken. Oh, these hands; what miracles

they are, and how they can woo and win the scholar's heart.

A friend of mine out West, who was a sympathetic, kind father, died. When the funeral was about to take place, before the coffin was closed and the friends had come, the oldest boy, about nine years old, said: "Mother, let me see father again." The mother asked him: "Why do you want to see your father again?" and the boy replied: "I want to look at his *kind hands*."

These hands are good to shake hands with when the scholars come to the class. When you shake hands with your scholars may I suggest if you have kid gloves on that you take them off, because kid gloves are non-conductors; skin to skin—that is the proper way to shake hands.

I was to address a certain Sunday-school in New York one day. Going in, I sat down near the door. The superintendent came in and looked at me as though he were a marble statue and I another, and passed on. I said to myself: "If ever I want to join a Sunday-school, this is the Sunday-school I would not join."

Again, I went to the Bushwick Avenue Sunday-school in Brooklyn, where Frank L. Brown was superintendent. Before I got past the vestibule, a young man stepped up and said: "I believe you are a stranger, sir. I am glad to see you. I will give you a seat after you register, and the moment the superintendent comes I will introduce you to him." The moment the superintendent came in

I was put in charge of the proper person and was shown around the school. The next Saturday, under a two-cent stamp, I got the following: "Dear Mr. Schauffler—We were glad to welcome you to our school last Sunday. If you do not belong to any school and would like to unite with us, we assure you of a hearty welcome, and can either put you in the proper class or give you a class, if you so desire. Yours truly, Frank L. Brown."

Wouldn't that draw me to that school? The secretary used his hands; the superintendent used his hands; the welcomer used his hands, and that is what won my heart. If I was going to join any school that is the school that I would quickly go to.

See what wonderful helpers you have—two eyes, two ears, two feet, two hands.

You have got *one mouth*, which is suggestive. Most people act as though they had only one eye, one ear, one foot, one hand, and two mouths. Nevertheless, this mouth is very helpful and he who can make good use of his tongue is just by so much a first-class teacher. In this respect we may ever offer the prayer: "Open Thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise."

Now the use of this tongue of ours is most helpful. I believe that on the whole it is the strongest helper that the Sunday-school teacher has, and therefore to its right use very great attention must be paid. With our tongues we welcome. With our tongues we ask questions. With our tongues we impart truth. We ought, therefore, to know the

fundamental principles of teaching through speech in the appeal to ear-gate—mouth-gate of mine appealing to ear-gate of the scholar. This leads us to a very important matter, namely: the art of questioning. We are appealing to our scholars' ears. We want, however, also to give the scholar a chance to use his tongue so as to arouse in the scholar mental activity and to secure from the scholar intelligent coöperation in our teaching. The whole matter of the art of questioning is one that deserves a whole hour at least for itself. I can only give you hints. You can carry them further by more detailed study.

A question is a wonderful thing. Even in a class where they are paying reasonable attention, the moment you say: "John, what do you think about this?" John's mind becomes active above the other minds because he is called by name. A question will arouse the mind of the inert listener as nothing else will do.

I want to call your attention here to several of the aims you should have in view in preparing your questions. In the first place, a question may be used *to test knowledge*. Oh, the ignorance on our part of the ignorance of our scholars, and therefore the misapplication of truth because we do not know the scholar's standpoint. We ought, therefore, to test knowledge by questions.

A teacher one day heard one of her scholars in reading the lesson responsively say: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees." At once she suspected

something, and when the class went to work she said to the girl: "Who were these Parisees?" The child replied: "The Parisees were people that dwelt in Paris."

See what a deficiency of knowledge that showed on the part of the scholar. Having opened that Sahara of ignorance, the teacher turned that girl's ignorance into an oasis of knowledge.

One of my teachers, herself a Christian girl, who had taken every prize offered in the school, came to me one day and said: "Dr. Schauffler, I never knew before that Jesus Christ was crucified four times." What a light that threw upon her mental equipment. Instantly I guessed that for the first time she had read the four gospels through seriatim and had found Him crucified in Matthew, in Mark, in Luke, in John—four times!

You say that happened in the tenement-house district. Very well, then, we will take Fifth Avenue. A lady on Fifth Avenue wanted me to prepare a series of topics on Bible characters suitable for lectures by various gentlemen in her own parlours, where she got together seventy or eighty wealthy ladies. I prepared the outline and took it to her and she said: "I see you have David, but not Solomon." "No," I replied, "I have only twelve persons to select, and Solomon was hardly worth while." "But," she said, "you have got to have Solomon as preparatory to David." My answer was, "I never knew a son was preparatory to his father before."

In the above-named case a well-known professor in a theological seminary was to deliver the first lecture, and his theme was: "The Canon of Scripture." He rolled on before these seventy or eighty high-bred ladies about the Targums, the Uncials, the Palimpsists, the Samaritan and the Peshito, and I don't know what all. In amazement I said to myself: "I wonder whether these people understand what he is saying." When he closed, with a self-contented smile on his face, he said: "If there is any lady who would like to ask any questions I would be glad to answer them." At that the daughter of the president of that seminary leaned over to me and whispered: "Please ask him what he means by canon," and I said: "Professor, a lady wants to know what you mean by canon." I thought that question would knock him down, so amazed was he, for really that was one of the simplest terms he had used.

The trouble with our teaching is that we fly too high. Questions will bring us down so that we descend to the point where the scholars live.

You can ask a question *to develop thought*. Thought is very vague in the minds of many. Suppose that you have a lesson on Moses, and that you affirm, "Moses was probably the greatest man that ever lived." Now pause and ask a scholar: "Why was Moses the greatest man?" That at once makes him stir around to find an answer. It makes him pull himself together to find out why. His answer may be faulty, but

at least he makes an effort, and an effort is a benefit to him.

A question may be used to *lead to action*. That is a most important aim in view. I saw that beautifully done one day when I had made an evangelistic address to an up-town Sunday-school. The superintendent then invited all who wanted further advice to remain. One of those who stayed was a young woman, and the superintendent and she and I came face to face. The superintendent said to her: "Mary, if the Lord Jesus Christ were here and were to say to you, 'My child, give Me your heart,' would you do it?" She answered, "I would." The superintendent added, "If the Lord Jesus Christ said, 'Give Me your hand in token that your heart goes with it,' would you do so?" "I would." Then the superintendent said: "Dr. Schauffler is Christ's representative here this day. He is going to ask you that question now as Christ's ambassador." Then I said: "Mary, will you give me your hand in token that you give Christ your hand and heart?" and she replied: "I will: here it is."

Wasn't he wise? Wasn't the leading up of that woman to action by questions beautiful, the question leading the scholar over the dividing line between contemplation and action.

A question may be used to *rebuke folly*; not very often, but sometimes wisely. A Bible class teacher in New York had a young man in his class who was very trying because when anything supernatu-

ral came up in the lesson, such as a miracle, he would break in and say: "I don't believe it because I cannot understand it." One day riding into town in the train, teacher and scholar were together. The teacher noticed in a field horses and sheep and geese, and all happened to be eating grass at the same time. The teacher saw his chance and said to the scholar: "There are sheep and horses and geese eating grass at the same time. In the case of the horse part of it turns to horsehair. In the case of the sheep part of it turns into wool. In the case of the geese part of it turns to feathers. Can you explain that to me?" "No," said the young man, "I do not understand it." "Very well," said the teacher, "then I won't believe it." In this way he showed the young man that because we cannot understand is no reason why we should not believe. That broke the scholar down, and he made no such foolish suggestion in the class after that.

One day one of my teachers came to me and said: "I wish you would teach my class to-day. There is a boy who watches his chance to say something ridiculous and so break up the class." I went down. The lesson happened to be a temperance lesson. This boy was quietly watching his chance. Among other things I chanced to say something to this effect, that if you think that you can fool with the Devil by taking a little strong drink now and then, you will be mistaken, for he will beat you at that game. Immediately the boy said: "Will he beat you with a stick?" All the other boys

laughed. They thought it clever. I said nothing. Presently I was talking about games and asked if any of them played games, and this boy said: "Yes, I play checkers. I played with my father last night, and beat him." At once I replied: "Did you beat him with a stick?" He saw my point and troubled me no more with his folly.

It was my privilege years ago to attend teaching by questions and answers as exemplified in the Teachers' College of New York City. At that time I was trying hard to learn what I might that would fit me for better work. I would have run from Dan to Beersheba to get a little help in this line.

The principle used there was this: First, the teacher must never have seen the scholars; second, the scholars must not know what the lesson is going to be; third, the teacher must tell the scholars nothing; fourth, the teacher must evolve out of the scholars everything. There is a proposition for you.

One day the topic was: "The Uses of Oils." Twenty boys and twenty girls, about twelve years old; many visitors. Teacher and scholars had never faced each other before. This was the way that clever woman began.

"'The Uses of Oils' is our topic. Have any of you got sewing-machines in your homes? Hands please. Will you tell me please if sometimes those sewing-machines don't run hard? Yes? Well, what is done when your machine does not run

smoothly?" "Oh, mother oils it." "Have any of you boys got bicycles? Hands. What do you carry with your bicycle to make it run smooth?" "Oil." "Do they use oil in machines of every kind at times?" "Yes." "Very well." Then she wrote this on the board: "Oil is used for lubricating purposes," and she added, "When we use oil to make machinery run smooth we call it lubricating it." She first gave the thought, then she gave the nomenclature.

"How many of you have ever been sick? Hands. What was the matter with you?" "I had the toothache." "Better?" "Yes." "What was the matter with you?" "Awful stomach-ache." "Did your mother do anything for you?" "Yes, sent for the doctor." "Did you get well?" "Yes." "Did the doctor give you anything?" "Yes." "What did he give you?" "Magnesia." "What was the matter with you?" "Stomach-ache." "Did your mother give you anything?" "Yes." "What did your mother give you?" "Castor oil." "What did you say?" "Castor oil." "Oh." "When you give a person something to make them well, what do you call it?" "Medicine." "Could Castor oil be called medicine?" "Yes." She wrote on the board: "Oil can be used for medicinal purposes."

So one by one she drew out the uses of oil, telling them nothing, drawing it all out of them; giving them first the idea and then its nomenclature. When she came to the matter of manufac-

turing purposes there was difficulty. She could not tell them, so she fished and fished for it, and they were all trying to get at what she was after. At last one boy said his father had a paint-shop. "Do you often go there?" "Yes, but mamma don't like me to." "Why?" "Because I spoiled a pair of trousers there once." "How did you spoil them?" "I sat down on a barrel of linseed oil." "A barrel of what?" "A barrel of linseed oil." "Well," she said, "what does your father use linseed oil for?" "Oh," he says, "he uses it to mix paint with." Then she had it. "Oil is used for manufacturing purposes."

She told them nothing. She drew everything out of them. They practically did it all and she put it on the board. What a wonderful use of questions!

Every teacher has *one head*; that is to say, one mind. This mind is that which gives direction to eye, ear, foot, hand and mouth. This head is that with which we gain our knowledge, with which we direct every effort. This head is that which every teacher ought to use (as also every superintendent) for the gathering together of all those factors which make us successful in our work. We ought to know, all of us, the fundamental principles of pedagogy and paidology. We ought to know, all of us, the developing nature of the child so that we can fit our teaching through mouth, ear and eye to the varying needs of the scholar. That means some study on our part.

That means getting, not many, but the best books along the line of the developing of child nature. One of the marked directions in which child nature develops is from the egoistic to the altruistic. The little child is egoistic. It is *I, my* opinion, *my* this, *my* that. But when the child reaches the age of adolescence the altruistic comes in. We have to know that, because it is useless to teach a beginner along altruistic lines and it is folly to deal with adults along any other line than that of altruism. The boys and girls, before reaching adolescence, diverge after they reach the ages of seven and eight. Before that age they still play together and there is no sex difference. But as they grow a little older the boys begin to call the girls "sis-sies," and go off by themselves, and the girls call the boys "nasty," and go off by themselves. It is hard to bring them together during that period. When it comes to the period of adolescence it is hard to keep them apart because every girl wants a fellow, and when a girl is so fortunate as to have two fellows, she is in the seventh heaven. We must know these facts so as to handle our scholars in the proper way.

These heads of ours are to teach us not only the boy, but the Book, and that is why I have striven to throw a little light on the two. Mere listeners never accomplish anything, but work will accomplish almost everything and the poor teacher who is willing to work will grade up and up, whereas the teacher who will not work will grade down

and down. You see then how important it is to use properly the capacities that God has given us.

Finally, the eleventh helper that we have is the *heart*. I showed, I think, yesterday how this heart is dominant over all. It underlies all. God has given us our affections and through these affections we win the affections of our scholars. That teacher who loves the scholar will work for that scholar. That teacher whose heart goes out constantly looking after the welfare of those under his care is the teacher that will gain favour in his work and be able by his influence to win the scholar for Christ and for Godliness. The heart is our Gibraltar and if that Gibraltar is well kept then sooner or later everything else falls into line. It is that heart that will lead the teacher constantly to ask for guidance divine and power superhuman in the work. It is that heart that will lead the teacher to present the scholar daily at the throne of grace. My better half had a larger class of young women than she could always remember the names of, but on her knees every day the class book was open in front of her and in private prayer it was gone through every day. That was because the heart was there and the heart dominated all else.

The heart will constantly go out to the scholar in his misfortune, in his sickness, in times of financial stringency. The heart will do these manifold things and so by God's good grace, supplementing and directing all that these ten other helpers furnish us, will so coördinate them that we will be

a benediction to our scholars without measure. The heart will reach up God-ward first with supreme love, will reach out next scholar-ward with equal love and will strive to bring the two together. Then, by divine grace, there will come to the class so great a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.

XI

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORKER'S WIDENING HORIZON

IN developing my theme I must deal somewhat with detail. Detail is not as interesting to the average hearer as are bird's-eye views ; none the less, no Sunday-school worker is thoroughly equipped, and no Sunday-school is on the up-grade unless much attention is paid to detail.

Years ago Mr. Wanamaker made a visit to the Sunday-school of which I was superintendent and when he saw the condition of the school he said to me : " What is the secret of your success ? " I answered : " Attention to detail." " That is enough," he replied.

At one time Michael Angelo was chiselling out the heroic statue of David that is in Florence when a friend visited him and remarked that the work was nearly finished. Months after the friend returned and still Michael Angelo was at work on that statue. The friend said to him : " I thought you were nearly finished six months ago." " Oh, no," he said. " Well, what have you been doing these six months ? " " Oh," he said, " I have softened a little this muscle and brought out a little more markedly that glance of the eye." " But

those are all details. They are mere trifles," the friend said, to which the great sculptor replied: "These trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle."

So in Sunday-school work trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle.

What I have to say in this chapter will be somewhat autobiographical. I started in Sunday-school work as a kid, a mere freshman in Williams College, Massachusetts. My only proof of fidelity was, first, that I did try to prepare my lessons, and, second, that I trudged two and a half miles on foot to the school and two and a half back, and that I do not remember any New England snow-storm with snow-drifts up to our breasts that kept a few of us from tramping through the snow to get to our classes. But, oh, the ignorance with which I went to my work! Oh, the narrow horizon that I had, which yet never occurred to me to lack anything. I failed to realize that my class was a part of the larger unit of the school. I failed to realize that I ought to visit my scholars. Woe is me, I failed to realize that I ought to know whether my scholars were Christians or not. It is pitiful. Yet you will meet Sunday-school teachers in your work just as ignorant as I was, who need enlightenment, and a proper appreciation of their work, so that they shall see how wide is the scope and how vast the influence of a rightly conducted Sunday-school.

When I grew somewhat older and became a little more experienced in Sunday-school work I saw, for

example, that in the work of the teacher for the class there were other things that he must attend to besides the mere interpretation of the facts of the lesson. He must know, for example, what his scholars are reading along secular lines, whether they are reading light, trashy literature, poring over the Sunday paper with its grotesque caricatures and contemptible comic page. He must know the companions of these scholars—what company they keep. We have them only one hour in a week. All the rest of the time some one else has them, and other influences are surrounding them that may not be uplifting. If I have a boy, for example, who is in the telegraph messenger service where the boys sit in the office and exchange filthy stories, I must know that, so that I can meet the situation, and can in some way correct the evil influences which for six days, and sometimes seven, are dragging them down.

If my girl is in the department store I must know her environment. I had at one time in my school a very beautiful young woman who worked in such a store. While talking to her one day she said to me, "We have great temptations. Men come in the store and to the lace counter (where she was) and buy lace. Then by and by a man will say, "I would like to buy a piece of lace and wouldn't you accept it as a gift from me?" There is only one meaning to that. Or another man buys something from the lace counter and then says, "Sundays you must be troubled to know how

to spend the day. I have a splendid span of horses and if you would like we can go for a drive on the Speedway." There is only one meaning to that.

See, the horizon widens from that little circle where I merely teach this lesson for this Sunday. You go a little further and perhaps you become superintendent of a school. Most ministers, in my judgment, in small churches ought to superintend their own schools. I have never had charge of a church that I did not superintend my school. It means hard work, but what are we here for?

You will very soon find that the horizon widens rapidly when you assume charge of a school. You find now that the individual class is only a unit in the collection of units that form the school. You will find the interest of the individual class must sometimes be subordinated to the larger interest of the school as a whole, for the school as a whole is of more importance than any individual class that wants to branch off by itself and do what seems good in its own eyes.

Very soon your horizon broadens again and you begin to see that music is more than music. Music, rightly conducted, is worship. In many schools hymns are given out without the slightest reference to the lesson, or to the conditions of the school. Different conditions in the school require different hymns. As soon as you begin to understand the mission of church music, if you are thoughtful, you realize that a large part of our hymnology requires explanation. We understand it, but our scholars

do not understand it and, consequently, they sing with spirit, but not with understanding.

Take some specific instances. One of our hymns reads :

“ Here I raise mine Ebenezer,
Hither, by Thy help, I'm come.”

I wonder how many of you know what an Ebenezer is. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of our scholars do not, and, as a result, they sing without understanding.

“ From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat ;
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat.”

When I was a boy I wondered what the mercy-seat was and how I could get under it to get peace. No one explained it to me. When you give out hymns like these they need explaining before you sing, otherwise the words are often really meaningless.

How many of our Sunday-school scholars do you suppose understand the allusions in the following very familiar verse ?

“ Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone ;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee.”

That means nothing to them. They do not know of Jacob at Bethel, lying down and making a stone his pillow. They do not know of the ladder that he saw in his dream with angels descending and ascending. The verse is so much gibberish so far as their understanding is concerned.

“ Sinners, whose love can ne’er forget
The wormwood and the gall,
Go spread your trophies at His feet,
And crown Him Lord of all.”

I fancy there are many adult scholars who do not know the meaning of the wormwood and the gall, and so they, too, sing without understanding. I could go on in this manner almost endlessly.

Of course, the widening horizon of the Sunday-school superintendent shows him that he has got to have in his school order. Order is Heaven's first law, and it is the last law in a great many Sunday-schools. We have what we call "Opening Exercises," which are correctly named, because the door keeps on opening to let the late-comers in, especially during the singing. But hymns are a form of devotion. They are worship, and we learn that we have to defend the punctual ones from the disorder of the late ones in their worship, and therefore we make proper arrangements to keep the late ones out until such time as we are not singing praise to God.

Our widening horizon makes us realize that teachers' meetings for the study of the lesson are

necessary. Never will you get all the teachers to attend the weekly meeting, but if out of twelve you get five or six, you should be satisfied. Their influence will affect the others. They will urge them on. With a teachers' meeting (without which I would conduct no Sunday-school on earth) you find better work is done and the school goes right up grade.

You see in these ways how the horizon is steadily widening? Very soon you begin to understand that you must grade the school. A gentleman was in to see me this morning about his particular class where he said that young men and women nineteen and twenty years of age were put into joint lessons with children seven, eight and nine years of age. If the angel Gabriel came down to teach that class he could not do it. You cannot teach nineteen-year and nine-year old scholars the same thing at the same time. Gradation has to be entered upon, so that those who are of a certain degree of intelligence are put together. Those at a higher level are put by themselves. So gradation is forced upon us when we understand the significance and importance of our work as teachers.

When I began to grade my school I found difficulties because the hearts of the teachers did not respond. However, finding a teacher, for example, with scholars from eight to sixteen years of age, I knew perfectly well that that teacher could not do first class work, so I prepared a blank which said, "Dear friend: I find scholars in your class from

ages so-and-so to so-and-so. You must have difficulty in teaching scholars of such divergent ages. I would suggest that you let me regrade the scholars in your class from age this to age that." Some of the teachers said, "Yes, try it." Some of the teachers said, "Let me alone." I let them alone and tried with those who were willing. In about six months in a teachers' meeting I said, "Quite a number of us have been trying very careful gradation. I would like to hear what their experience is." With one accord they said, "We never knew the real joy of teaching before as we know it now." Then I said, "Some teachers have not had their classes graded yet. I will grade them if they wish." Then all the classes came in and were properly graded.

You will not be long at your work before you understand that there is something in graded lessons. This idea of grading lessons, with which I had a great deal to do as chairman of the International Lesson Committee, is good. The only trouble is that we have tried to grade too minutely. We shall soon begin to grade less minutely and by departments, instead of by years. Even then a majority of the Sunday-schools in the United States will not be able to accept graded lessons because they are not well enough organized. About twenty per cent. of the larger schools already have graded lessons. Seventy-five per cent. will not for forty years be able to adopt a complete system of graded lessons.

You realize that in your widening horizon the main aim of the Sunday-school is conversion and Christian culture. That was one of the first things that impressed itself on me. I found that the school I took charge of in New York had been running fourteen years, about one thousand strong. I found that, excluding the primary department, only two per cent. of the scholars were members of that church. I saw that was all wrong. The result was that applying good common sense methods, ten years after that thirty-six per cent. of the scholars were members of that church.

The horizon, however, widens again. You started with your class; you widened to your school. Presently the worker will realize that in the city where he lives or the county where he is teaching there are more schools than his. His school isn't *it*. He will begin to realize that he must have some relationship with the county organization and that he must gear himself into that larger machinery so that his school may be a part of the larger body.

Every school, therefore, ought to be a member of the county association, if there be one, in order that the school may give and get: may give of its experience and get of the experience of others. In that way all the schools will be enriched, each one profiting by the mistakes or by the success of the others and in a little while the whole school organization in the county will become more and more a power for the spread of the kingdom of God on earth.

It will not be long, however, before you realize again that the state is larger than the county. I will never forget when I woke up to the fact that New York State was larger than New York County. You realize that you ought to grade into another organization larger than the last to get good work. Every county and city association ought to have organic and vital union with the association of the state. Nearly all of our states are organized. You have your state organization. Are your schools geared into the state organization? These state associations have, as a rule, annual conventions where they call the best men of the state and such other talent as they can secure to set up before the Sunday-school the highest standards of excellence. In that way the whole Sunday-school work is revived, is improved and becomes a great power in the community. Of course, this gearing into the larger organization means you give an annual contribution to that organization, because organizations have some legitimate expenses and every school in the state ought to give to the state Sunday-school treasury.

Well, we haven't gotten thus far before another horizon begins to dawn on you and you begin to realize that the state is not everything. The United States is larger than any state, even Texas; and you begin to realize that the United States is organized, together with Canada, into what is called the International Sunday-School Association. You begin to see that there is something

nation-wide, and, indeed, larger than that, for we are allied with the Dominion north of us. Every Sunday-school, therefore, ought to be an organic part of that larger unity. Yet I fear that there are thousands of schools that do not know there is an International Sunday-School Association.

This International Sunday-School Association has triennial conventions and the first one that I attended was held in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1877. We came down from the North to that convention in considerable numbers. Behind the platform in the convention church there was a map of the United States. Every state that was organized had on it a large gold star. In every state every county that was organized had on it a small gold star. My state, New York, of course, had a large star and having sixty-one counties, all organized, had sixty-one small stars, so that the state was considerably gilded. Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, Massachusetts, all had their large and their small stars. Georgia had no star of any kind. Well, our Georgia friends stood that for two days. Oh, that awfully blank spot on the map called Georgia! On the morning of the third day some dear brother from Georgia had cut out a piece of gold paper the size of the whole state and had pasted it over the state. When some one said, "I see a great change has taken place on the map," this man replied, "Yes, we of Georgia are sick of seeing Georgia with no gold. I have prophetically covered it with gold." Three years later the convention met in Toronto and

seventy-two delegates came up from Georgia, headed by their governor. They had been aroused. Our going down there had brought life, enthusiasm and energy into the state of Georgia, so that the whole state pledged itself to the Sunday-school idea as it had never done before and when these seventy-two Georgians came marching in and sat down side by side in the Toronto convention there was tremendous enthusiasm, not on their part only, but on the part of every one who had been at the previous triennial convention.

You see when this international convention passes from state to state it arouses the attention of the state. It stimulates the workers of the state. Those who are present catch the enthusiasm and go back to their schools refreshed and fitted to do better work in the future than they have ever done in the past.

In this way this tremendous horizon broadens and broadens until we realize that we are an army about twenty million strong, fourteen million of us in the United States and the balance in Great Britain, India, China, Japan, the islands of the ocean, Ireland, France, Germany, Africa. This makes us realize that we are not a few fighting alone, but that we are a part of a great and valiant army.

You begin to see, fellow workers, how thus far all this makes our horizon almost world-wide. As a matter of fact, we have got to broaden it once more so that it may be truly world-wide and so there is a World's Sunday-School Association.

Thus we have the individual Sunday-school ; we have the city or county organization ; we have the state association ; we have the International Sunday-School Association ; now we have the World Convention, and that takes in all Sunday-school workers from all over the world. They also have their conventions ; though rarely in this country.

The first of these conventions was held in Jerusalem, in 1904 ; "Jerusalem the Golden," as it never had been for centuries before that convention met there. We chartered from the United States a passenger steamer, filled only with Sunday-school delegates. All along the line it made its impression. When it stopped at any port the question was, "Who are all these ?" "That is a Sunday-school convention. These are delegates from America to Jerusalem."

There was no building in Jerusalem that could hold them. They had their tents and many meetings were held in the open, on the Mount of Olives and on Calvary.

In 1907, they met in Rome, the Imperial City, and there again these thousands poured in and the idea was, "Sunday-school." The next convention was in 1910, in Washington, D. C. Then 1913, last year, these delegates gathered together in Zurich.

I might say here that in order to do all that is possible in behalf of those who buy tickets, excursions were afterwards arranged, from Zurich down through the Rhine, along the Riviera, and through certain portions of Italy. Everything is done to

make each of these excursions as profitable to these workers as possible.

The next convention comes in 1916 and is to be held in Tokyo. See; you have had Palestine, Italy, Switzerland, the United States, and next the great empire in the Far East. We propose there to arouse the workers, in Japan and in near-by Korea, so that we can bring to them our Anglo-Saxon views of the Sunday-school idea, so as to bring up the native children from earliest childhood in the nurture and admonition of the Lord to the end that they may be workers in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you see where we are? My theme was: The Sunday-School Workers' Widening Horizon, and it has become world-wide so that we may realize in every school that comes into this world-wide coöperation the magnitude of the opportunity and the fullness of the privilege and power that the Sunday-school organization throughout the world is able to exert for the uplift of mankind and for the bringing on of the kingdom of God.

There have been many things that have been accomplished by the International Sunday-School Lesson Committee. For many years I have been studying the International Uniform Lesson System. That system having been adopted by the major part of the Sunday-schools of the world, has brought forward a set of writers for Sunday-school lessons such as the world has never seen. It is possible now to secure the best talent to write Sunday-school lessons, for the demand for the lesson leaves

of the different denominations is so great that we can pay the workers the best prices and yet make money for the various Sunday-school organizations of the denominations.

I have seen Sunday-schools shrink up in their own little circumference, and stagger on and fall paralyzed. I have seen Sunday-schools branch out in this broader sympathy, this international idea, and receive the fullest blessing from it.

There is one more widening of this horizon. So far it has been an earthly widening, including all classes of men here in this life. Now my vision, like that of St. John on Patmos, stretches beyond and I begin to see that the influence of the Sunday-school is not only terrestrial, but is celestial. I begin to see the ransomed of the world, the thousands and millions of those brought to Christ by the Sunday-school, who have heard the Master's call and have gathered beyond the river, and now they are beginning to sing that celestial song: Unto Him that loved us and gave Himself for us, and that washed us in His own precious blood, unto Him be glory forever and forever.

Fellow workers, that work is not terrestrial only, is not international only ; it has a wide horizon that takes in the other world. So we work with our fellow beings for glory eternal when the ransomed of the redeemed in the Lord come home with shouts of thanksgiving and triumph unspeakable.

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