

The Sunday School Times.

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CONTENTS.

EDITORIAL:	
Notes.—Who Need the Teachers'-Meeting? Aroused by Thanksgiv- ing. Exit—The Old-time Christmas Festival. A Danger in Lead- ing Knowledge Gained Through Experience. More Special Writers on the Acts. The Last Twelve Verses of Mark.....	753
Getting Back to Christianity.....	753
NOTES ON OPEN LETTERS:	
Histories of Rome. The Case of Jael.....	754
FROM CONTRIBUTORS:	
Unspoken Music [poem]. By the Rev. Samuel W. Duffield.....	755
The Genuineness of Mark 16: 9-20. By Professor R. B. Warfield.....	755
Sunday-school Reminiscences. By Talbot W. Chambers, D.D.....	756
Christmas and Anniversary Giving in the Sunday-school. By the Rev. Sylvanus Stall.....	756
The Quickening Spirit. By the Rev. H. T. Scholl.....	757
FOR CHILDREN AT HOME:	
The Oriole Family. By Miss Annie E. Wilson.....	757
LESSON HELPS:	
Lesson Calendar.....	758
[Lesson XII. December 17. After his Resurrection. Mark 16: 9-20.]	
Lesson Analysis.....	758
Lesson Bible Reading.....	758
Lesson Surroundings.....	758
Critical Notes.....	758
The Great Commission. By Charles S. Robinson, D.D.....	759
Illustrative Applications. By H. Clay Trumbull.....	760
Teaching Hints. By M. C. Hazard.....	760
Hints for the Primary Teacher. By Faith Latimer.....	760
Question Hints. By Miss Anna T. Pearce.....	761
Blackboard Hints.....	761
Orientalisms of the Lesson. By Professor Isaac H. Hall.....	761
BOOKS AND WRITERS:	
Illustrated Poems.....	762
Boys' Books of Mythology and Romance.....	762
Wild Animals and Birds. Landseer Series of Picture Books. Red Cloud. After the Freshet.....	762

The more a teacher has studied his lesson, the more likely he is to feel the need of the further help of the teachers'-meeting. He wants to know what points in the lesson have perplexed others, and what points have seemed to them of practical value, in order to direct his own thoughts and energies most effectively for his class. It is only the poorly furnished teacher who thinks he can get on as well without the teachers'-meeting as with it. The trouble with him is, that he doesn't know how much more he needs to know.

One of our readers is exercised because the President's Thanksgiving Proclamation has appeared in our columns. To his mind, that looks too much like "politics;" and when he reads a religious paper he wants to be free from all disturbing causes. The quicker that man drops The Sunday School Times, the better it will be for his quiet of mind. If there is one thing in this world that we are determined on, it is to keep our readers stirred up. We fairly delight in a reader who can be aroused to opposition by an invitation to thank the Lord. He's a model reader, as we look at it.

The old-time Christmas festival—whereat sugar-plums and rattle-boxes, dolls and picture-books were distributed by the Sunday-school to its scholars as if in reward for their coming to learn about Jesus—is passing away, and it will soon be numbered with church-lotteries, and church-fairs, and church-debts, as a sin and a folly of the "good old days" of our fathers. It is now a very common thing—and always a commendable one—for the scholars to come together at Christmas time with their offerings to Jesus, as on his Birthday. Wherever the scholars are trained to this plan, they enjoy it; and it would be a praise-worthy plan even if they did not enjoy it. In enforcement and illustration of the principle involved,

the Rev. Sylvanus Stall, who has had much to say about the duty and the modes of Sunday-school giving, tells our readers, this week, of "Christmas and anniversary giving in the Sunday-school."

There is a danger in the indiscriminate, and too common, lauding of knowledge obtained through experience, over knowledge obtained from other sources. A young man might be named who, although not a student of medicine, is in the habit of dosing himself with various poisons, merely that he may know from personal experience what are the effects of those poisons; and it is to be feared that this is but an illustration of what is constantly being done in the moral sphere. It ought to be impressed on the minds of all young people, that there are things which it is not desirable to know, and that to know them by experience is a cause for shame. When one's experience leads him to look with equanimity or with approval on that from which before he rightly shrank with disgust, it is a sufficient sign that his experience has been unhealthy and improper. The look of amazement, or of horror, on the face of a "green" youth, on the first revelation to him of some too common phase of iniquity, is as honorable to him as the knowing wink of another who has grown callous by the experience of iniquity, is disgraceful to its giver. "Experience teaches fools;" and in some things it is only fools who will be willing to learn by experience.

The list of special writers already announced for our columns in conjunction with the lessons from the book of Acts, has drawn forth warm commendation from various quarters. Zion's Herald kindly refers to it as, "including almost every eminent name on both sides the water." Yet there is quite a number of eminent names from both Europe and America which we hope yet to add to that list. We have announced no name until the desired article was either already in hand or explicitly promised; and we are confidently awaiting favorable answers from writers in no way inferior to those already named. We add this week the following:

Power from on High.

By Bishop G. F. Pierce.

Antioch as a Centre, as suggesting the Divine Strategy of Missions.

By Professor M. B. Riddle.

Diversities within the Apostolic Church—Jewish and Gentile Christians.

By Professor Llewellyn J. Evans.

Angel Messengers in the Book of Acts.

By Dr. George Dana Boardman.

Communism in the Early Church.

By Professor J. P. Gulliver.

Apostolic Opinions Concerning the Deity of Christ.

By Professor L. T. Townsend.

One of the important changes introduced by the New Testament Revisers is in the familiar passage (1 Tim. 2: 16) formerly rendered, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine," etc. This now reads: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," etc. This new reading suggests, that if we are to find profit in teaching from the inspired Scriptures, we must first

know what scriptures are inspired. There are portions of the Bible—as we have known the Bible—the genuineness of which are called in question by reverent Bible scholars. It is certainly worth our while to consider the matter of the correctness or error of the popular and the traditional view on every such passage. Just now our Sunday-schools are taking up the last twelve verses of the Gospel according to Mark, as that book stands in our Bibles; and they must face the fact that the genuineness of those verses as an integral portion of the original text, is denied by some and doubted by others. President Woolsey expresses his opinion against their genuineness, in his Critical Notes. And now, at our request, Professor Warfield, of Alleghany Theological Seminary, gives his view on the subject. Next week, we shall lay before our readers the argument of the venerable Dr. Thomas J. Conant for the genuineness of these verses. And so those who are interested in this question (and who is not?) will have helps to its fuller understanding, in order that they may arrive at an independent judgment on its merits.

GETTING BACK TO CHRISTIANITY.

The student of religious and secular history does not need to read much, or to think very deeply, before discovering the ebb and flow of spiritual and intellectual currents. At one particular time, it may be, all seems lost or won; it is only by taking a large view that we discover that

... "Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process
of the suns."

The narrow mind, noting only the present moment, is now elated and now depressed; but meanwhile the eye of an Ezekiel, looking far beyond, beholds the holy waters rising until they form a river that cannot be passed over.

Amid the religious discouragements of the past few years—discouragements due to indifferentism, or materialism, or this or that phase of contemporary doubt—there have been clear evidences of the rising tide. There is, to be sure, a somewhat common tendency, among optimists, to magnify the importance of "significant facts." But it is something more than mere optimism that convinces us that the power of distinctly anti-Christian forces is less than ten years ago. Some doubters have moved upward but a little; others have made greater advances; but the general direction has been plain. It was not an accident, nor was it, as has been claimed, the mere weakness of mental decay, which led Emerson, in his last years, back to the regular services of the denomination which he had "outgrown." There is some meaning in the regular attendance at a church which must be called distinctly conservative by the standards of the same denomination, of a preacher who, a few years since, was scarcely a deist, and who saw no higher purpose in life than "to stand erect and ask questions." We have hitherto noted the plain disposition, on the part of "cosmic" or "neo-pagan" poets to accept, of late, the doctrine of the personal immortality of the soul. Not less significant, on another plane, is the definitely theistic—not pantheistic—motive of the followers of the Transcendentalists, on Concord soil. Darwin, in his later years, while disavowing all religious, and still more all Christian, purpose, accumulated

for this place, but also that he probably did not write it at all. We are not, then, to ascribe to these verses the authority due to God's word.

2. We have an incomplete document in Mark's Gospel. We do not know how it happens to be incomplete,—whether because of an early accident to the book before any copies were taken, or (more probably) because of some interruption to Mark,—possibly his arrest, or flight, or even martyrdom,—which prevented his finishing it. The important point for us is that, although a Gospel comes to us mutilated, the gospel does not.

3. We know little of the origin of the fragment which has been thus attached to Mark. We know only that it is very ancient,—certainly as old as the first third of the second century,—and that it is a fragment of a longer writing, which some scribe thought would furnish a fitting close to the mutilated Gospel. We may conjecture that it originated among the scholars of John in Asia,—possibly is a tradition from Andrew or Peter recorded by Papias, and hence attached to Peter's Gospel.

4. The fragment is not, however, without its value to us, chiefly in this aspect, that it brings home to our minds how fully even the mysteries of our faith would be historically witnessed to us even had we no inspired Bible, and thus teaches us how bountifully God has dealt with his people in securing to them, in inspiration and out of inspiration, the knowledge of saving truth.

Alleghany Seminary.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

BY TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D.D.

It is a maxim as old as Solomon that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, or, as the Apostle expresses it, God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the foolish to confound the wise. It has often seemed to me that my early experience illustrated this truth. Being born of godly parents, I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a religious education, which was greatly aided by the presence in the household of two maiden aunts whose steadfast piety, tenderness, and love produced such an impression on my mind that, so far from sharing in the common prejudice against elderly spinsters, I always look upon them with respect and affection. My immeasurable indebtedness to two of the tribe makes me think well of all their sisters.

As far back as I can remember I was sent to Sunday-school, which in my case was not a substitute for home instruction, but an aid to it, and a very useful one. I can now recall, after the lapse of half a century, the names and characters of five different teachers under whom I sat. One of these, and I think the first, was an intelligent and refined Christian lady, whose influence was almost destroyed by the stupid sneer of some of my companions who derided me as being taught by a woman! and I was just silly enough to heed them. How often in later years have I seen a company of hulky boys, regular gamins of the street, held in gentle but complete restraint by a delicate young lady! These young roughs sometimes seem to have a higher respect for female excellence than others better born and brought up. The next teacher was a college graduate in training for the ministry, who, of course, was well informed and able to give me much information. But he was called away to finish his studies at a theological seminary. His place was taken by another student, who, although not remarkable as a scholar (as I afterwards learned), had such a sympathetic manner and cheery tone that it was pleasant to recite to him. But in a year's time he, too, was summoned away to a seminary.

The stock of theological students being now exhausted, I passed into the hands of a gentleman in middle life who had been bred to the law, but, being possessed of ample means, spent his time in study and in charity. He took great interest in his class, and spared no pains to render the teaching efficient. But for a reason, which I now forget, he relinquished the charge, and was succeeded by a young man who had recently become a resident of the town and was partner in a mercantile house. He was a man of fine presence and most engaging appearance, with a winning smile and a musical voice. But he had had few or no advantages in early years, and had been overtaken by divine grace just after entering manhood, when business cares prevented him from repairing the deficiencies of his earlier years. The consequence was that often he had to ask us questions which he was unable to answer himself. Indeed, he had far less knowledge of the general run of Scripture than I myself had even at that early age. Yet this man had more influence upon me for good than all my other teachers together. One reason was that he never made

any concealment of his ignorance, but ingeniously acknowledged it, reminding us of our greater advantages, and entreating us to use them aright. His tones, his looks, his whole manner, indicated that he loved us and was seeking our welfare, and what he said sank down to the bottom of our hearts. It so happened that within a year he was attacked by an acute disease, and after lingering many weeks, during which he had a partial recovery followed by a relapse, he was taken to his heavenly home. Thus death put a sacred seal upon all his instructions, and his scholars carried through life the single, undivided impression of his tender, loving heart and blameless life. Knowledge and capacity to convey it are important to a Sunday-school teacher, but both are of small account compared with the Christ-like spirit which exemplifies the love described in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. The soft word breaketh the bone. The glowing heart kindles a flame even amid thick-ribbed ice. Knowledge is power, but love is a greater power. I and my companions well knew that our teacher loved us, that he took the position not merely from a sense of duty, but because he wanted to do something for the Master, and that when he urged us to give our hearts to the Saviour, it was because he knew experimentally the blessedness of union to Christ. Hence, after we knew him, religion seemed a different thing from what it was before.

A dozen years after the period just described, the Sunday-school boy had become a minister, and was in charge of a congregation composed in equal parts of villagers and country people. The church edifice had a particularly vile basement in which the weekly lecture and the Sunday-school were held. Is not the earth large enough for all its inhabitants to live above-ground? Is there any excuse for those who do not reside in a crowded city where real estate is held at enormous rates, and yet subject themselves and their children to all the evils of a subterranean dwelling? The school taught in this damp, dark, dreary basement was conducted after the manner prevalent forty years ago. The exercises consisted in reciting a hymn from memory, and also a portion of Scripture, in answering the questions in the old book of the American Sunday-school Union, and in standing an examination upon certain questions in the catechism. There was a small library, but no black-board, no illustrated papers, no hymns with a ringing chorus, no anniversary, nothing out of the usual course save a quarterly meeting, when a report of the school was read, followed by a sermon to the children by the pastor. Among the teachers was a young lady, who, without any special advantages of education, was intelligent, and who prosecuted her work with much zeal and devotion. But she often complained to me of her ill success, saying that it really seemed to her at times that her scholars, instead of benefiting by her instruction, were becoming worse. They apparently were only more frivolous and worldly minded. And she thought that she had better withdraw, and give place to some one else who might hope to reach more favorable results. I said to her that I had much the same experience, and that I might therefore do the same thing, for there was no reason for making a difference between the two cases. The result was that she concluded to continue her work. Within eighteen months of our conversation, every member of her class confessed Christ. The frivolity which seemed so settled and impenetrable yielded to the quiet, persistent influence of a true Christian affection. Of course, other influences, such as the home and the pulpit, concurred in this result, but none the less does the case illustrate the value of steady perseverance. Regeneration is, we know, instantaneous; but the steps that lead to it are often very gradual, and none of them, so far as we can see, can be spared.

THE QUICKENING SPIRIT.

BY THE REV. H. T. SCHOLL.

That a church may be vital, aggressive, successful, its members must be wrought upon by the Spirit of God "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." A church not under the Spirit's influence is spiritless, fruitless. "The Spirit giveth life," and the Spirit's fruit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Such is the Bible doctrine, and the doctrine is attested by historic facts.

Representative Pharisees, in the days of Herod Antipas, were distinguished for rigid orthodoxy. They professedly kept the law, and a mass of oral traditions. Strict was their observance of the Monday and Thursday fasts. They paid tithes "of mint and anise and cummin." They were scrupulous about washing the hands and the fore-arms before eating, about bathing on their return from

market, and about "many other things" as the "washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels." Punctilious were they in the matter of dress; the fringes on their outer garment, the tassels of thread like dark violet ribbon pendant from the corners of the ample robe, the phylacteries, one for the forehead, one for "the bend of the left arm," accorded with traditional patterns. They were men of prayer, spinning out formal petitions three times a day. From their abundance they contributed towards the support of public worship, flinging handfuls of chinking coppers into the trumpet-shaped openings of the temple treasure-chests. They attended, when practicable, the three annual feasts: Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles. The very name of the sect is significant. It is derived "from Perishin, the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word Perashim, 'separated.'" Members of this party regarded themselves as separate from the ungodly (Luke 18: 11); they, moreover, deemed their righteousness superior to that of Christ. On various occasions they accused him of disregarding traditions of the elders, and of breaking the law. They stigmatized him as "a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." They charged him with casting out demons through Beelzebub, their chief. Christ was also condemned to death for blasphemy, and crucified between two malefactors. His estimate of the Pharisees is evinced by such passages as Matthew 23: 15; 5: 20.

Mere formalism is barren; beliefs however correct, orthodoxy however rigid, are fruitless without the quickening Spirit. We want an intelligent laity sound in doctrine, we want a well-educated ministry loyal to church standards; but, above all, we need for pastors and for people the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without him we can do nothing. As of old Israel turned from God to Assyria, to Egypt, for assistance; so in this day churches are seeking success by relying upon this plan or that. One service each Lord's Day will not secure for us the victory, nor will the adoption of an optional liturgy. Machinery serves a grand purpose in enabling us to transmit and use force, but of what avail is the machine without the force. Soldiers of the cross need armor and weapons; lifeless soldiers, however well equipped, cannot triumph over principalities, powers, world-rulers of this darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.

For three years the apostles were trained by Christ. They listened to his words of public and private instruction, witnessed the mighty works which attested his divinity, went about with him doing good, and when, eagle-like, he stirred up their nest, they took short flights from village to village, heralding the Messiah, healing the sick, casting out demons. After the resurrection, Christ showed himself to the disciples "by many infallible proofs," spoke "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," opened "their understanding that they might understand the scriptures."

But something more than this training and this illumination was needed: hence the parting command "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." On Pentecost the promised gift from the Father was received, "and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Through the quickening power of that Spirit, nearly three thousand souls dead in sin were made alive, that day, unto God. Through the quickening power of that Spirit the weak became strong, the timid valorous. On the night of Christ's betrayal Peter deserted, and with oaths denied the Master. Two months later, he and fellow-apostles "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake." Not by might nor by sword, but through the Spirit, the church of the apostles braved the world's hostility, and triumphed over Jew and Gentile foes. Valorous was that little army of the cross. From victory to victory it advanced under the Captain of our Salvation. Kings and rulers vented their rage against it in vain. Futile were the plots of adversaries, bootless the intrigue of enemies. They were foolishly fighting the Almighty. Against the sharp boss of his buckler they rushed to their own destruction.

Fatal for the Jews was their opposition of God's elect. Herod Agrippa vexed the church; "the angel of the Lord smote him, and he was eaten of worms." As for his countrymen, how terrible their punishment! In A. D. 70 Jerusalem was taken by Titus, and was wasted by fire and plunderers. The magnificent temple was destroyed. Of the defenders one million perished. Of the survivors, "the children under seventeen were sold as slaves; the rest were sent, some to the Egyptian mines, some to the provincial amphitheatres, and some to grace the triumph of the conqueror."

In spite of pagan persecutions, the church, quickened by