Principles and Ideals *for the* Sunday School

BURTON AND MATHEWS

PRINCIPLES AND IDEALS FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

An Essay in Religious Pedagogy

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MDCCCCVII

Published June 1903
Second Impression August 1903
Third Impression July 1907

Composed and Printed By
The University of Chicago Press
Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A.

PREFACE.

THE authors of this little book have been for years engaged in the work of the Sunday school as teachers and officers, and for almost as long time have been occupied as biblical instructors, training young men for the Christian ministry. For a number of years we have also had a share in the editorial conduct of the *Biblical World*, a journal devoted to the promotion and improvement of biblical study, both private and in schools of various kinds.

Portions of the following chapters appeared in their original form as editorials in the *Biblical World*. They are republished here in revised form, with the addition of several chapters not previously printed, in the hope that they may contribute somewhat to that further development and improvement of the Sunday school so imperatively demanded by its own splendid past and the widening horizon and better methods of biblical study. In particular it is hoped that they will be of service to the students for the ministry with whom we are associated in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.

We are well aware that we have touched very

lightly or passed by altogether some topics as germane to our subject as some of those which we have discussed at length. The reason of this is that we have written out of our own experience. It is for this reason in particular that we have said so little about the elementary division of the school and practically nothing concerning the kindergarten. We fully recognize the profound importance of the work in these departments of the Sunday school, but, having had too little experience to give us even a conceit of wisdom concerning this work, we must refer our readers to the writings of those who have dealt specially with this phase of the subject.

We venture to hope, however, that what we have written will be of value for teachers of those classes whose pupils constitute what is perhaps the greatest problem of the Sunday school, the boys and girls of grammar-school and high-school age.

We wish to express to President W. R. Harper our sense of indebtedness, especially in reference to the chapter upon the "Organization of the Graded School." What we have there written has been in no small measure learned through our experience in the Hyde Park Baptist Sunday School, of which he has been for a number of years superintendent and we directors or teachers.

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PART I

THE TEACHER

CHAPTER I.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The purpose of the Sunday school

WHAT is the purpose of the Sunday school? Aim clearly recognized determines means, method, and spirit. No more fundamental question, therefore, can be asked respecting the work of the Sunday school than this. The answer must be based, not on mere names, for institutions often grow beyond their names; nor merely on past history, for the past is not necessarily the measure of the present. Appeal must rather be made to the place which the Sunday school is actually filling or attempting to fill in the complex work of the church.

The Sunday school an educational institution

The Sunday school is somewhat more than a school, if by a school is meant simply a place for learning and reciting lessons. Some of its exercises belong rather to worship than to instruction. Its characterization as the children's church, most unfortunate in some respects, is not wholly wrong. But instruction holds, or certainly ought to hold, the central place. The Sunday school is essentially a school, an educational institution, and its central task is the study and teaching of the Bible. Even those who dislike the name

"Bible school" will admit that, whatever the purpose of the school founded by Robert Raikes, this term correctly describes the character of the institution according to the now generally accepted ideal. But if this be so, it follows that the Sunday school must aim directly at imparting such instruction as will justify this ideal. To conceive of it in any way which will obscure its function as an educational institution will be fatal to any right conception of its work.

The Sunday school a religious institution

Yet this is not all that is to be said. Another fact must be taken into account before this definition can be accepted as adequate. The Sunday school as now existing is an agency of the Christian church. It is to be classed along with public worship, preaching, and prayer-meetings, as one of the means by which the church seeks to accomplish its great aim, the conversion of men and their cultivation in Christian character. Occupying this position, the Sunday school cannot find its ultimate aim merely in the acquisition or impartation of knowledge, even though it be knowledge of the Bible. It is true of every school really worthy of the name, but it is preeminently true of the Sunday school, that it must seek a moral and not merely an intellectual end, must aim at character as well as knowledge. And, if so, then of course the moral must be the ultimate aim. Knowledge of the Bible, itself the

proximate aim of the Sunday school, as a school, must be a means to the ultimate end. And the aim of the Sunday school as an agency of the church must be recognized to be to secure, through teaching of the Bible as the chief means, the conversion of the pupil and his development in Christian character.

The teaching shares in both these purposes

If all this is true of the Sunday school as an institution, it must also be true of the teaching work in particular. It is because teaching is its central element that the Sunday school is distinctively an educational institution. That which gives character to the institution must itself partake of the character which it gives to the institution. The *teaching* of the Sunday school must aim directly at the acquisition of knowledge of the Bible on the part of the pupil. But none the less consciously must it aim at the attainment of that moral and religious result which belongs to the school because it is a part of the work of the Christian church. The central element in the school cannot remain unaffected by the ultimate purpose for which the institution itself exists. The *teaching* of the Sunday school must seek as its ultimate aim the conversion of the pupil and his development in Christian character.

Such a conception of the purpose of the Sunday school, and in particular of its work of teaching, gives to the institution a distinct and defi-

The Sunday school has a distinctive place of its own

nite place. It distinguishes it from other schools which, though they may not altogether exclude the Bible from their curricula, do not make it the only or even the chief subject of study, and which, though they recognize the necessity of including the cultivation of character in their aim, assign to it a place only co-ordinate with the storing and training of the mind. It assigns to the Sunday school a definite place in the varied activities of the church, distinguishing it from the ordinary public service in which, though biblical instruction is included, worship and the immediate application of truth to life are the determinative elements; from the prayer-meeting, the characteristics of which are the interchange of Christian experience and the cultivation of the devotional spirit; from the evangelistic service, where the human will is directly addressed, and men are urged to right decision; and from the philanthropic work of the church, in which the spirit of Christianity expresses itself in deeds of kindness. Such a conception of the work of the Sunday school recognizes the peculiar relation of our religion to the Bible, and the necessity that underneath worship and devotion, ethical instruction and the persuasion of the will, missions and philanthropy, there shall be a firm foundation of knowledge of that pre-eminent revelation of God which is the source and support

of Christianity. It recognizes the need of one service, which, having the same ultimate aim as that which is sought in all the activities of the church, shall seek that end specifically and mainly by instruction in the Bible.

Reasons for this definition of its aim

If it be asked why the Sunday school should seek its ultimate aim of religious development in a sense by indirection, why the ultimate religious purpose should not in every service of the church be directly and avowedly sought, at least two valid answers may be given. In the first place, there are certain ends which, at least with some people, are best attained by indirection. It has long been recognized that the affections are best cultivated, not by commanding ourselves, for instance, to love those whom we ought to love, but by pursuing a course of action which tends indirectly to cultivate love. The same principle holds in the cultivation of character. What argument and appeal and exhortation wholly fail to accomplish can with some minds — perhaps to a certain extent with all minds — be accomplished little by little through instruction, conveyed either in the exposition of teachings or in the study of history and, especially, of biography. And, in the second place, it must certainly be acknowledged that the most solid results in character cannot be attained except upon a broad foundation of knowledge. The fervent appeal, often spurning

knowledge and ignoring instruction, may seem at the time to be most effective in saving men and advancing the interests of Christianity. But all experience proves that alike in the life of the individual and in the development of the kingdom real and permanent progress is made only when zeal rests on a solid foundation of knowledge of the truth. The letters of Paul, especially those of the latter part of his life, lay great emphasis upon the necessity that love shall abound in knowledge and discernment.

Effect of this conception on the work of the school

This conception of the determinative purpose of the Sunday school as both religious and pedagogical has important relations to almost every problem of Sunday-school management. The character of the curriculum, the qualifications of teachers, and the method of study and of instruction will all be in no small degree determined by its acceptance or rejection. If the Sunday school is a school and is to attain its end primarily through instruction in the Bible, does it follow that it ought to have a definite curriculum, each year's work of which shall be adapted to the pupil's stage of development? And will a graded curriculum do away with the principle of uniformity so long followed? If the Sunday school is a real educational institution, can it be carried on by untrained teachers, and, if not, what is the nature of the training required, and what

are the necessary qualifications, intellectual and moral, to be demanded in teachers? Have we today, can we have in the near future, any large number of teachers who possess these qualifications? If not, must we secure proper teaching by a more careful instruction of teachers, and possibly by decreasing the number and increasing the size of classes? And will this again affect in an important way our church architecture? If the Sunday school is a part of the distinctively educational work of the church, does it demand as its leader and overseer a man specially trained for educational work, and specifically for the teaching of the Bible? Can we ever have trained teachers until we have at the head of the school a man educated in the Bible and in pedagogic method? And does this in turn call for a new type of minister, the teaching minister alongside of the preaching minister? Finally, if instruction is the central function, and yet not the only function, of the Sunday school, what are the other legitimate departments of its work, and how are these departments related to the teaching work and to one another? Some of these questions will be discussed in the following pages. It must suffice for the present to raise them.

Some resulting questions

CHAPTER II.

THE TEACHER AS A STUDENT.

Study precedes teaching

ALL will agree that good teaching is the first great requirement of a Sunday school that is to fulfil is true function. Now, teaching presupposes study. There may be study that is not followed by teaching, but there can be no teaching that is not preceded by study. The teacher must be a student. Not that all study is study of books. One may teach farming having studied it only in the school of practice, or botany knowing only what he has himself observed. One may conceivably teach religion on the basis of experience only. But in every case he who teaches must first have studied what he is to teach. Our Sunday schools are correctly, even if not adequately, described as Bible schools. They teach the Bible with a distinctly religious motive; they teach religion; they even teach personal religion, and base such teaching on personal experience. Yet the Bible holds the central place in the teaching, and it is this which is supposed to form the subject-matter of instruction. The Sunday-school teacher must therefore be a student of the Bible. If, as there is

reason to fear, many of our teachers have had no training in the study of the Bible and have no definite idea how to study it, there can be few duties more urgent or more important for the pastor or superintendent than the teaching of the teachers how to study; there can be no duty more imperative for the teacher than to learn how to study.

Study of the Bible is search for its meaning

What should be the aim of the Sunday-school teacher in his character as a student of the Bible? Specifically the answer depends on what part or phase of the Bible he is to teach. If biblical history, then he must study its history; if biblical ethics, then its ethics; if biblical theology, then its theology. But all these answers are included in the one answer that his task as teacher is to teach the meaning of the Bible, and his task as a student is to find the meaning of the Bible. It is not a mistranslation, or a misinterpretation, when the words which literally read, "Go learn what this is, I will have mercy and not sacrifice," are rendered in our English Bible, "Go learn what this means." It was the meaning that Jesus wanted his hearers to find. The meaning of the Bible *is* the Bible. The student of the Bible must be first of all an interpreter. His first task—his whole task strictly as a student of any book or passage—is the discovery of the meaning of that book or

passage. Every apparatus or method which obscures from him this object or impedes his progress toward it is a hindrance to study.

But how can this task be performed? How can the student discover and rethink the thought which the writer of the book has expressed in the words which stand on the page? The method must be for all students fundamentally the same, but we have in mind here especially the Sunday-school teacher who brings to his study a fair degree of intelligence, but no special linguistic or exegetical training.

Attention as a means of interpretation

First of all let it be said that a great deal can be accomplished by simple *attention*, provided only the purpose to discover the meaning be clearly and firmly held in mind. Nearly one-half of all our difficulty in the study of the Bible arises from failing to recognize what such study is, failing clearly to define to ourselves that our first object must be the discovery of the meaning of what we are studying. And nearly one-half of the remainder arises from simple inattention, failure to perceive that which is before our eyes, and which requires no special exegetical apparatus to interpret. Attention will not accomplish everything. One sees only what he has eyes to see. In study more than in any other activity of life the great pedagogical law holds: "To him that hath shall be given." The more one knows

already, the more one gains by each new act of attention. But, generally speaking, intelligent attention directed toward gaining the meaning of a writing will disclose to the student many things that he had never perceived before. Moreover, it will show him that there are certain things that he does not understand, and will raise questions concerning the meaning of what has been observed which it will not itself answer. Such interrogation is itself a great gain. To define the question that demands answer is to take one long step toward obtaining the answer.

Investigation and acquisition

Attention thus prepares the way for *investigation and acquisition*, that is, for the search for information beyond that which the passage itself yields to the student's present powers of perception. The precise scope of such investigation and the line of division between attention and investigation will manifestly vary with the student. What one man perceives at a glance another must search out. The means of investigation available to one man may be wholly unknown or unusable to another. The teacher in the Sunday school is not generally a professional biblical scholar. In his case as in that of his pupils the great question is: What can attention do and what methods and instruments of investigation are available for the fairly intelligent student of the English Bible?

A practical answer must distinguish two somewhat distinct fields of study: an entire book and a single passage of the Bible.

Attention applied to a whole book

It is a familiar thought today that the parts of any single book of the Bible are adequately understood only in the light of some knowledge of the whole. Some knowledge, we say, since, of course, perfect knowledge of the whole is in turn dependent on knowledge of the individual parts. The necessity of such knowledge of the whole varies greatly in different books, but exists in some degree in respect to all. It is greatly to be desired that every Sunday-school teacher should begin his teaching of lessons from any given book with some large knowledge of the book as a whole, of the circumstances that led to its being written, of the purpose of the author, its general plan and structure. Such knowledge can usually be gained in large part from a careful study of the book itself, though it is frequently the case that the evidence of the book is intelligible only to him who knows the history of the period, and, indeed, often reveals itself only to a somewhat highly trained power of "attention." These facts render such preliminary study peculiarly difficult. If, for lack of training in such work, the teacher is unequal to the task of discovering the evidence which is in the book itself, he will do well to call in the help

of one who can show him what is there, making use of some good work on "introduction" or the articles in a dictionary of the Bible. Yet he will do better who learns to do this work for himself, using first attention and then investigation. Let him read the book through attentively to discover any evidences in it concerning its occasion and purpose, carefully noting in writing all that he finds. Let him seek to find out its great divisions, if such there be, and make out a plan of the book. Then, when "attention" has done its perfect work, let him supplement this work by that of "investigation," following out historical references which are to him obscure, or other hints which may point to the occasion of the book, using for such purpose whatever trustworthy books are accessible. Finally, he may supplement his own work by that which other students have published.

Attention applied to a single passage

The same general method will apply to the study of a portion of a book assigned for a particular lesson. The general scope of the book being before his mind, the aim of the teacher should be to find out as accurately as possible the exact thought expressed in the particular paragraph before him. And attention and investigation are the two processes by which he must work.

If any teacher who reads these pages has

Self-interrogation as an aid to attention

been perplexed and baffled in the attempt to study his Bible, we commend to him the experiment of sitting down to the study of the lesson without commentary, "quarterly," or other help, and, with a clear conception of his aim as a student, diligently setting himself to see what is before him. Let him ask himself the question: Do I understand the meaning of these successive words, as they were used by the writer? Do I know what he meant by the individual sentences? Do I perceive the connection of thought, as it lay in his mind, between the successive sentences? Do I grasp the meaning of this whole paragraph? Let him treat the book, or the portion of the book, as he would treat a letter which he had just received, and whose meaning he was deeply desirous of understanding. In many cases we are sure he will be surprised at the result of this simple effort to see what is before his eyes.

The passage to the process of investigation

If, when in any stage of the process attention has done its best, there still remain unanswered questions, or if there be any doubt what is the correct answer, recourse must be had to investigation. If the student is in doubt what a word or phrase meant in the mind of the writer, he must seek trustworthy information. If it is a single word, an English dictionary will perhaps define it. If it is a concrete term like "syna-

gogue" or "Pharisee," an ordinary dictionary of the Bible will usually give the needed help. If it is one of the profounder terms of the biblical vocabulary, such as "righteousness," "grace," "eternal," or the terms that seem so simple in their literal sense, but which, when we come to ask for the thought for which they stand, are found to be so difficult of apprehension, such as "life," "light," "darkness," he may search in vain in the dictionary; for, unfortunately, there is as yet no adequate dictionary of biblical words for the English reader. In such case he must resort to some other source. And here comes in the value of the commentary (the term being used to include the commentary portion of all the special lesson helps). Its proper function is not to save the student the trouble of giving attention, but, first of all, to answer the questions that attention has raised but cannot answer.

The use of dictionaries and commentaries in investigation

The question answered, the word defined by dictionary or by commentary, attention resumes its work to discover now, if possible, by help of this added information, more of the thought than was perceived before. If still there remain unanswered questions, or if new ones are now raised — for it is a secondary function of the commentary to raise questions that untrained attention fails to raise for lack of being intent enough — he must betake himself again to such

The use of other helps

helps as are in his reach, always bringing, if possible, his question with him for answer; or, if he already have a provisional answer, comparing this with the answer of the student who wrote the commentary, and judging as wisely as possible which is the true answer. By such process as this, combining attention and investigation, seeking always the whole meaning of the passage, the whole thought of the writer, laying all trustworthy sources of help under contribution, but always making them serve him, not submitting himself to be led blindly by them, the student may come to such apprehension of the meaning of the Scripture as is possible to him.

After interpretation, application

Will these two processes of attention and investigation prepare the teacher to teach? Not necessarily. But they will infallibly give him material for teaching. Often they will make the pedagogical process very easy. But the Sunday-school teacher is not merely a teacher in the narrower sense of the term. He is also a preacher, as every good preacher is also a teacher. He is concerned, not simply with the presentation or impartation of truth, but has to do also with the application of it to his pupils, with its moral effect on their hearts and conduct. This means that the teacher, besides being an interpreter of the Bible, must be a student of humanity also, and likewise an orator, in the best sense of that

term. He must not merely discover the meaning of a portion of the Bible for himself; he must study it also from the point of view of the pupil. Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull has well insisted that there is no teaching by the teacher unless there is also learning by the pupil. This principle applies in all teaching, whether of arithmetic or geography or Scripture. But there is a further fact that must be remembered by the Sunday-school teacher. It belongs to his work not simply to inform and train the mind of his pupil, but to bring the truth to him in such a way that it shall influence him to right feeling, choice, and action. And study is as truly required to prepare the teacher to do this as it is to enable him to discover for himself the truth he is to present to the mind of his pupil.

Real teaching reaches and moves the pupil

Thus to the task of discovering the meaning by attention and investigation the teacher must even as student add that of the application of the lesson to the needs of his pupils. Having asked himself, "What can I see here, and what can I find out that I do not at once see?" it still remains to inquire, "How does this truth apply to my pupils?" To answer this question in the study — and it must not be left to the spur of the moment in teaching — requires knowledge of the pupil, sympathy with him, and imagination to conceive his attitude of mind, his likes and dis-

Therefore, study the pupil

likes, his temptations and his aspirations. One might even say that the best way in which a teacher can study is by imagining himself his own pupil. No part of the teacher's work is more difficult or delicate. For no part of it is it more difficult to formulate rules. A few suggestions may, however, be ventured. First, let the teacher remember that he is to apply that alone which he has found to be the meaning of the passage which he is teaching. Hence application can come only after interpretation. Only when attention and investigation have done their work in discovering the meaning of the passage under study is the teacher prepared to consider the question of application. It is one of the besetting sins of the teacher to rush headlong to application without taking the time for patient interpretation. In the second place, it is well to remember that the application which the pupil makes for himself is often more forcible than any that the teacher can make. The clear presentation of a religious truth, the forcible picturing of a character, good or bad, will often preach its own sermon most effectively. Let the teacher then be sure that he himself clearly sees and that his pupil clearly perceives the event, the character, the teaching with which the lesson deals — and sometimes he may be content to leave it there. Yet still again let it be remembered that, especially in

Apply the meaning reached by interpretation

Let truth make its own application

biographical and historical study, the most forcible and helpful lessons are taught, not by single incidents, but by longer surveys of history, and by prolonged contact with the character. This is pre-eminently true of the study of the life of Jesus Christ. This exerts its most helpful influence on the mind that with patient study seeks to master the facts of that life and to understand the person. Results are not to be attained at the end of each lesson. Do not make the mistake of concealing the life itself in the multiplicity of "lessons" and applications. Yet, finally, do not be afraid of application, and at times of pointed application. Study diligently beforehand both the lesson and the pupil, that you may discover whether there is truth here taught or illustrated which has a direct bearing on the lives of your pupils; and then so direct your teaching that this truth may, if possible, impress itself forcibly on the mind of your pupil. Do not force a foreign meaning into the passage that you may have it to apply. This is alike dishonest and disastrous in its influence on your pupil. Sometimes leave the truth to the pupil's own conscience to enforce. But never forget that your teaching fails of its highest end if in some way the truth does not both reach the mind and move the heart of your pupil. The ultimate end of all teaching is the conversion of the pupil and his building up in Christian character.

Don't force results

But be sure that they come!

CHAPTER III.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE TEACHER'S STUDY UPON HIMSELF.

Shall the teacher study only intellectually?

THE attentive reader of the preceding chapter may perhaps have turned its pages with the question more or less distinctly in his mind: Is the teacher's study, then, to be a purely intellectual work, a mere search for meanings? If so, whence is there to come to him any spiritual benefit, whence is the pupil to gain that spiritual help which is the ultimate end of all teaching of the Bible? The question is a fair one. It is axiomatic that the teacher who gains no spiritual help from his study will impart none in his teaching. If his method of study is such that it brings him no uplift or strength, it can hardly have a different effect upon his pupil. Is the method which we have been describing, then, one which will be barren of spiritual result for the teacher himself?

Investigation not necessarily religious

First of all, let it be answered that the method, looked at purely on its intellectual side, is not guaranteed to produce spiritual results for either teacher or pupil. The interpretative process has in itself no moral virtue over and above

any other form of mental activity. Nor is the interpretation of the Bible certain to lead to obedience to the truth it may discover, or fellowship with the God who gave the truth. Interpretation can of itself give only perception of the truth, not acceptance or assimilation of it. To a mind in spiritual sympathy with God, and in love with truth, interpretation will so present the truth as to make possible the assimilation of it and an obedience to it. Without such spiritual sympathy, interpretation can only flash the light ineffectually upon a mind insensitive and irresponsive. Indeed, more than this is to be said. The lack of sympathy dulls even the powers of perception. The mind sees most quickly and clearly that which it loves to see. He who has no love of beauty stares with unperceiving, unappreciative eyes at the artist's masterpiece. He who has no love for spiritual and moral truth can never understand such books as those which compose the Bible. It cannot be too strongly or too often affirmed that a merely intellectual, non-religious study of the Scriptures is not only spiritually unfruitful, but unscientific. A man who studies, be it never so intently, the prophets simply to discover political history, or the Pentateuch solely in search of constituent documents, may easily fail to find anything beyond that which he seeks. Spiritu-

The religious spirit indispensable for the student of the Bible

al sympathy is indispensable for the sound interpretation of books written to convey spiritual truth. As the Bible is intended to set forth religious truth, so must it be studied in a religious spirit. Hence arises the need of prayer in connection with study of the Bible. Only in the atmosphere that prayer creates, the atmosphere of sympathy with God and truth, of desire to know the truth, to act in accordance with it and to bring others into fellowship with God through it, can the teacher gain a true insight into the truths which the Bible teaches.

Spiritual sympathy a condition not a substitute for study

But let it not be overlooked that this spiritual sympathy with divine truth is the *condition* of successful interpretative study, not the *substitute* for it. When we insist upon the need of studying in the atmosphere of prayer, we do but emphasize, not retract, all that was said in the previous chapter concerning the necessity of maintaining constantly the interpretative aim and pursuing it earnestly with attention and investigation. Prayer, "the Christian's vital breath," is also the interpreter's clear atmosphere.

But granted that the teacher studies earnestly and prayerfully, shall he expect and demand a definite and an immediately appreciable spiritual blessing, daily manna out of heaven, so to speak? Is he to be dissatisfied with himself or

with his way of studying if he is not able to taste each day the joy of a conscious elevation of spiritual life? Is he to regard his teaching as a failure if it does not work like results in his pupils?

Must religious results of Bible study be immediate?

Any teacher knows that in the realm of study harvest does not follow immediately upon seedtime. The student of chemistry does not expect that his first reaction or any later one will immediately lead him into a new consciousness of mastery of his science, nor does the student of history expect to get a correct knowledge of the laws of human development when he first begins the study of Greece. Each may find his enthusiasm growing; each may occasionally be startled into a new appreciation of the truth he is unfolding, but neither is concerned continually with his enthusiasms or with his appreciation of the teachings of nature or history. Each knows that the more data he obtains the broader will be his outlook and the more intelligent his interest in his particular subject. But to seek at the end of any hour of study an answer to the question whether he were becoming a better chemist or a better historian would be to dissipate his energy and defeat his very ambitions.

So in the realm of Bible study. Often spiritual insight and uplift come immediately upon the reading of a passage. There are times in

To seek immediate quantitative results both unnatural and dangerous

men's lives when they are conscious of a most rapidly growing Christian experience, but such moments are generally retrospective. Men are convinced that they *have grown* rather than they *are growing*. He who constantly attempts to uproot his Christian experience in order to measure its development makes his life miserable with his introspection. The kingdom of God is to be established and developed in accordance with natural laws. As the plant grows imperceptibly to fruition, so, in the words of Jesus, is the kingdom of God to grow secretly, one does not know how, and gradually; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The leaven, though it leaven the whole lump, is not to accomplish its mission at once, and a long time separates the mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, and the mustard plant, the greatest of all herbs. To disregard this law of nature is to endanger not only one's peace of mind, but the truth of Scripture. Spiritual teaching is often not to be obtained from a specific passage by any legitimate method of interpretation, for the reason that it contains none. The constant search for such teaching, coupled with the determination to extract a certain amount of spiritual food at all costs and within a given time, is certain, by inducing the student to seek, not what the Scripture meant, but what he wants it to mean,

Spiritual meanings to be discovered, not invented

to lead to a misuse of Scripture and a positive perversion of its teachings.

Bible study and normal spiritual growth

What, then, may we say is the true method of biblical study for the student and teacher who desires to get from it a real spiritual result both for himself and for his pupils? At the risk of undue repetition we reply: First, he must study the Scriptures with the determination to perceive and appreciate as thoroughly as possible exactly what the author of the book or passage intended to say. It is not for the interpreter to add to or subtract from this meaning. Second, the student should study in a sympathetic spirit; and this implies that he is to endeavor to put himself under divine influence by prayer. Having thus endeavored to get at the truth precisely as it is, and to bring himself as nearly as possible to the author of all truth, he should, in the third place, have such confidence in that truth and in that author as to believe that spiritual growth is inevitable. As a man has confidence in the power of God as revealed in the outer world, so should he trust God as he is revealed in the laws of human nature. Divine truth will not return to its maker void of results. He who seeks to apprehend exactly the teachings of prophet or apostle or the Christ, and who is willing to incorporate in his conduct such truth as fast as it is revealed, need not be seeking for

The truth to be trusted to produce results

quantitative spiritual growth. Such a student is working, not only patiently, but scientifically, and such study can no more fail to produce spiritual character than the earth can fail to produce a harvest when once the seed is planted in it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BASIS OF AUTHORITY IN TEACHING.

I.

Shall teaching in the Sunday school be "authoritative"?

ONE of the most interesting and vital questions connected with religious instruction was opened not long since by the report of the United States Commissioner of Education upon Sunday schools. If we understand it, the position taken in the report is that the pupils in the Sunday school should not be taught to investigate, but, with minds kept from all questions as to biblical difficulties and problems, should be taught religion upon authority. Such a view as this, therefore, conceives of the relation of the teacher to the pupil as that of one who imparts truth to minds incapable of accepting truth on other grounds than that of the authority of the teacher or church.

The justification of such teaching

It is not difficult to appreciate the strength of such a position as this, especially on its negative side of protest against introducing the discussion of biblical "problems" in the Sunday school. Most of the pupils in our Sunday schools are but children, and to bring to them questions as to the authorship of the Psalms, or of the authorship of the

epistle to the Hebrews, would be to confuse their minds without bringing them any information of vital importance. Even in the case of older pupils it is still true that many of the problems connected with more technical biblical study are altogether unsuited for discussion in ordinary Sunday-school classes. To bring to an immature mind a problem over which the best scholars of the world are perplexed would be to awaken doubt rather than interest, and, while it is not true that doubt is the worst curse that can befall a man, it is none the less advisable as far as possible to save a mind from doubts which are not likely to be laid.

It is also true that the Sunday school is not the place in which to instruct even adult classes in the detailed methods of criticism and exegesis. Although there may be exceptional classes in Sunday school where advanced methods are possible, as a general rule it must be held that the instruction given in the Sunday school must be comparatively simple.

What is meant by "authority"?

But what shall be said of the positive side, the assertion that teaching must rest upon authority? To whose authority is the teacher to appeal? To his own or to that of his church as expressed in its creed? The problem is perhaps not so simple as at first sight it seems.

If one approaches the question from the first

point of view, and asks how many Sunday-school teachers are authorities because of their professional attainments, it must be said that the percentage of such teachers is small. Occasionally, it is true, the pastor of the church, or some instructor in a theological seminary or college, conducts a class for scientific investigation, but even in such cases it is not always true that the teacher has any such mastery of the details of the question as to make his opinions of weight simply because it is he rather than some other person who utters them.

Not that of a church

Again, if one ask whether the teacher is to insist that a thing is true because it is supposed to represent the position of his church, then such a method of teaching seems to be far more questionable. What warrant has the teacher of the Sunday school for speaking as if he or she could infallibly express the opinion of a church? And if this were possible, it would still be necessary to face the fact that since the Reformation it has hardly been true that ecclesiastical authority has been everywhere recognized as legitimate in religious teaching. Certainly, among those great bodies of Christians who are chiefly interested in Sunday schools, to speak of an authority on the basis of which a teacher may impart instruction, regardless of reasons, is an anachronism. Until the infallibility of the Sunday-school teacher as the

interpreter of the church, and of the church as an expounder of truth, is beyond dispute, we may well question whether, instead of pronouncing one's opinion upon disputed matters, it would not be better to avoid discussions of such matters altogether, and limit religious instruction to that wide field in which appeal can be made to the teachings of Jesus and of the other men whose words have been preserved in the Bible. Here appeal to authority, namely, not the authority of the teacher, or of his church, but that of the prophet, apostle, or Christ whose words are quoted—that is, broadly speaking, of the Scripture—will be by most minds recognized as legitimate and felt to be powerful. And because such appeal undoubtedly has a sound basis, however difficult it might be for teacher or pupil to expound the argument on which it rests, the teacher may well content himself in most cases with resting upon such Scriptural teachings without discussion.

The teacher's authority that of the Scripture

But this in turn raises the question whether the teacher who recognizes and whose pupils recognize the authority of Scripture shall claim authority for his interpretation and application of that Scripture. For if teaching is to be in the fullest sense authoritative, both interpretation and application must in some way reach the mind with authority. Can the teacher safely make this

And this means the authority of an interpreted Scripture

claim? Nothing is easier than to misinterpret the words of another. Even in conversation the liability to misunderstanding is so great that few men are content to leave important matters to unwritten contracts. But the difficulty is even greater in the case of words spoken by men long since dead; for ignorance as to the circumstances under which they were spoken, the peculiar characteristics of their authors, indefinable changes in the meaning of terms, all combine to hinder one age from accurately understanding the words of another.

The finality of interpretation

This difficulty can indeed be to a considerable extent overcome by one who will deliberately undertake to meet it, and every teacher is bound to overcome it as far as possible. The man who would understand another's words must rigidly exclude from his mind any meaning which he thinks those words *ought* to possess, or which he would *like* to find in them; and with a self-effacing honesty seek to discover exactly that which the writer meant and nothing else. And this brings one face to face with a moral element in a teacher's use of the Bible. The fact that the final meaning may be reached lays him under moral obligation to find it, if possible. The fact that such certainty as yet is lacking in many passages of the Scripture is no ground for his arrogating to himself the license of understanding a

The moral aspect of interpretation

passage in any way that he sees fit. There can be but one meaning to a passage, and, sooner or later, that meaning is to be found. To use a passage in any other way than that justified by well-recognized methods of interpretation is as dishonest as it would be in reporting a saying of a friend to give it a different meaning from that which it really possessed. No novelty, no depth of spirituality, no attempt to defend or modify a biblical teaching, can justify the use of a passage of Scripture in any other than its original meaning. To find this original meaning, which alone has true Scriptural authority, is not an impossible task, but it is often a difficult one, and the teacher who would claim authoritatively to have interpreted Scripture must be well equipped for his work.

The transition from interpretation to application

But even after the exact meaning of a passage has been gained, the teacher who wishes to appeal to inspired authority lacks something of complete preparation. How shall he, after he has once gained possession of the exact thought of Jesus, or prophet, or apostle, apply it to the needs of his pupils? Unless we mistake greatly, many teachers fail utterly at this point. Having obtained the meaning of a passage, instead of teaching *it*, they teach about it. The lesson becomes a collection of stories and miscellaneous truth, not the development and the application

of the authoritative word. It may be interesting, but a melange of truths will have little influence in stimulating or educating the Christian spirit. Still less can it appeal with authority to the pupil's conscience.

Such transition dependent upon historical insight

And yet it is no easy matter to translate the thought of one age into moral dynamics for another. To accomplish it the teacher must know not alone what the words of a text mean, but what it meant in the circumstances under which it was uttered. Historical knowledge and a keen perception of historical relations are indispensable. A call to live in tents, a rebuke for longings for Egyptian leeks and onions, a promise to make fishermen into fishers of men, each in itself is intelligible, but its application to modern life somewhat remote. If it be accurately understood in its historical settings, each is seen to contain truths that are full of present-day value. And the same is true of many another passage of Scripture. But such skill in this work as will give one full assurance that he is rightly applying the very truth of Scripture to modern life belongs to the few, not the many.

Such considerations should go far toward preventing a teacher's dogmatizing to his class, and should keep him ever mindful of the distinction between the authoritative truth of the Scripture and that version and application of

it which he presents to his pupil and which, despite his best endeavor, will always be somewhat affected by the medium through which it has passed. He ought to teach with conviction and with enthusiasm. But he will do well still to remember that his authority is a qualified one, and he will be wise to cultivate a respect for the mind and conscience of his pupil, without which indeed good teaching is impossible. It is significant that at the same time that the claim is made that religious teaching must be authoritative, the tendency of pedagogical science is toward the recognition of the child's individuality and of the rightfulness of his claim to be allowed to investigate and to ask questions. It is very true that there are some questions in religion which a child can ask though an older person cannot answer them in a way to satisfy a philosopher, but it is always possible for the teacher himself to deal frankly with the pupils' questions and to set him an example of honesty in dealing with the Bible. An intelligent boy or girl who five days in the week is being trained to ask questions and not to rest satisfied until he has obtained their answer will not be long in detecting the difference between the instruction which deals with nature and that which deals with religion, if the latter be merely opinionative and dogmatic. Why may not the pupil's mind be

Should not the Sunday school educate as well as instruct?

treated as if it were as rational in its search after God and truth as it is in its search after the explanation of other things?

Provision for the religious growth of the pupil

And one may go farther. Even if it be granted that with the younger pupils a certain degree of *ex cathedra* teaching is advisable, provision ought to be made as rapidly as possible for developing these pupils' power of independent faith as they grow mature. If Paul hesitated to exercise lordship over the faith of the Corinthians, a teacher of a Sunday-school class may well follow his example. Sometime in the pupil's life he must be able to stand alone within the circle of Christian teachings. It is the duty of the Sunday school so to train his mind that such independence may be intelligent and acquired without the painful processes of reconstruction. Every man as he grows mature must himself discover the seat of authority in religion, and he is a poor teacher who never prepares his pupils to make that discovery.

The advantage of teaching investigation

It is assertive, opinionative teaching in the Sunday school that has led so many of our Sunday-school pupils, as they mature, to give up Christianity as anything more than a mystical faith—a thing to be experienced, but not understood. If the minds of these persons had been from the very beginning trained to interpret the Bible and to grapple with religious problems fear-

lessly and earnestly in the light of its actual teachings, if they had been taught proper methods of study, looking toward the development of a power of independent judgment, it is hardly conceivable that they should have experienced such a reaction against Christianity as a rational thing. No small share of infidelity, we believe, is traceable to ignorant and overcertain instruction in the Sunday school. Nowhere is reform more needed.

II.

Authority finally that of truth

But what is to take the place of dogmatism? Certainly not a hesitant and timid retailing of uncertainties. To substitute the teacher's doubts for his convictions is to trade silver for lead. Obviously the object to be sought is to put the pupil in possession of the pure gold of truth; to beget in him personal convictions as near to the real truth as possible; to lead him to see and feel for himself the intrinsic and permanent authority of the teachings of the Bible, and to build them into his life. To do this let the teacher himself set the example of assuming toward the Scripture the humble attitude of the interpreter, and toward the truth when found the humble attitude of obedience, and let him train his pupils to do the same. Let him seek not so much by the weight of authority to drive home the interpretation and application of the Scripture which he has discovered

or accepted as to bring the pupil face to face in a receptive attitude of mind with the truth, that it may make its own powerful appeal. In short, let the teacher in the Sunday school understand that his duty is not to enforce his own views upon the pupil, but to lead that pupil to study the Bible honestly and to recognize and obey truth. The result will be that, while there may be fewer men and women who believe blindly the truths which as children they have received from someone else, there will be more who are believing intelligently and vitally the very heart of Christianity; for they will find the basis of all religious authority for themselves in the truth of Jesus and its applicability to human needs.

The Bible not a collection of atomistic truths

But it will be needful also for the teacher, especially for the teacher of the more mature pupils, to adopt for himself and to impart to his pupils a proper method in the use of the Bible as the one book that contains the final word upon God's character and man's duty. Such a method must rest upon a right conception of the nature of the Bible, and such a conception in turn will naturally spring from that open-minded spirit of interpretation of which we have spoken above. Coming to it in this spirit he will avoid the fatal mistake of looking upon the Bible, and teaching his pupils to look upon it, as a collection of atomistic proof-texts. So to consider it is to

miss its greatest lessons. But he will also come to see that the Bible is something more than the immortal literature of a nation and of a religious community. It is that of course. One has but to look at the Hebrew Bible, with its three collections of sacred books, to realize that he has before him the attempts made by the Jewish people at different periods to collect those writings which they judged of the highest worth. But not only is the Bible a collection of literature; this literature is also the record and the product of a historical and a developing revelation. And to view it in this light is to see most clearly its authority and the ground of that authority.

It is the record and product of a developing revelation

It is not difficult to help pupils to see this development. The painstaking effort of scholars, however much they may differ among themselves as to details, has placed beyond dispute this fact, that in the Bible we have the literary productions of every stage of the rise and fall of the Hebrew people. The saga, the folk-tale, the chronicle of the preliterary period; the history and legislation, political and religious teaching of national maturity; the lamentation, the prayer, and the song of praise and faith from years of national misery—all these have gone to make up the Old Testament. Similarly in the New Testament there are the writings of the original apostles, of Paul, and of those who were taught by apostles. It is a

Biblical literature as the product of an historical process

comparatively simple matter to make one's pupils realize how slow was the rise of such literature, and thus to realize how gradually the world was prepared for the life and teaching of Jesus.

This literature the record of a growing revelation of God

And they may be easily taught something even more important. The recognition of the fact that the literature composing the Bible is the product of different ages and diverse situations carries with it the recognition of the Bible as a record not only of a growing knowledge of God, but of a growing revelation of God. Popular theology too often fails to grasp the significance of this fact. According to it, it would seem as if there existed before the foundation of the world a certain number of divine truths, all absolute, none relative. A page of these truths, so to speak, was given to Abraham, another to David, another to Hosea, another to Paul. The complete collection of these revelations constitutes the Bible. In accordance with such a view, revelation is always absolute, of equal value for all time. Clearly enough, any recognition of the historical processes which gave rise to the men, the civilization, and the thought of the Scriptural literature is utterly inconsistent with such conception. But in reality revelation is impossible apart from human experience, and therefore conditioned by the moral capacities of the person through whom it is made. Only the pure in heart can see God fully.

The historical interpretation of a progressive revelation

And so it follows that the teacher must permit and assist his pupil to see that revelation through morally imperfect men may be outgrown. The very fact that a truth was sufficient for one age may make it, at least in part, insufficient for that age's successor; for revelation is dynamic; it not only fills but enlarges one's needs, and it can be final only as the moral development of the person through whom it is made is complete. If the law was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, the folk-tale was a schoolmaster to lead to the law. To elevate every religious hope and expression of an imperfect man living in primitive conditions into infallible, eternal religious legislation is to lose sight of the significance of the Bible itself. The supreme moral revelation of God can be that alone which has been made in the life and words of Him who, though tempted like prophet and apostle, was yet without sin.

The distinction between truth and its historical form

This means, therefore, someone may ask, that one should preach only the teachings of Jesus? Certainly not. There are truth and divine revelation throughout the Bible; but one must learn to distinguish between the form and the content of truth, and to discover in the very process of gradual unfolding of truth and the superseding of revelation by larger revelation the disclosure and the criteria of the permanent. The mountain peak, not the valley; the generic, not the

specific; the Christlike, not the merely Jewish—is the eternal element of the progressive revelation. From this point of view the entire literature of the Bible is full of inspired teaching.

This a fundamental condition of correct teaching

It may be too much to say that every pupil or every teacher can grasp this conception and hold it firmly and consistently. Nor is it to be insisted that the theoretical aspect of the matter should be much discussed in the Sunday school. What must be said is that, as the underlying postulate of Sunday-school teaching, the atomistic conception of the Bible and the conception of the equal and perpetual authority of all its teachings from Genesis to Revelation must gradually give place to that view of the progressive character of revelation which alone the Bible itself justifies.

The historical method winning acceptance

Indeed, the transition has already begun, and with most helpful results. We know the message of the prophets as never before; we understand the sorrow or the joy that fills the Psalms; we read the Pauline letters in the light of the times that gave them birth. How far do these historical interpretations resolve difficulties and illuminate matters already judged clear! A child taught that the Bible is a record of such a progressive revelation will early learn to see in every step of Hebrew history "foreshadowings of the Christ," and in no mechanical fashion will come to see how in Jesus all that was per-

manent of earlier revelation was preserved and made a matter of life. As he grows older he will find little temptation to abandon his early faith. The "discrepancies" of the Bible which have played such havoc both with the faith of the literalist and the conscience of the apologist will dissolve before him. A young Christian so trained will, as he reaches maturity, see the growth of the divine element in human experience, and will welcome all truth, whether it comes through the imperfect life of a David or the perfect life of his Lord. He will use the Bible gladly and intelligently as a source of supreme teaching, because it reveals to him eternal truths. But, because he knows that this truth came but gradually and through men conditioned and limited by circumstances and forms of thought in part or wholly outgrown, he will not confuse revelation in all its stages with final authority. That he will find in the truths disclosed and attested by the whole progress of historic revelation, and brought to full and clear expression in the words and life of Jesus.

The bearing of this upon the faith of the maturing pupil

CHAPTER V.

METHODS OF CONDUCTING A CLASS.

The problem of method

In Sunday-school teaching, as in all intelligent self-directed work, method is subordinate to purpose. But it by no means follows that method is unimportant. A good method consists simply in such an adjustment of means to the existing conditions as is conducive to the attainment of the end in view. If the end is important, such adjustment is inferior in importance only to the end itself. Method, we have said, using the term generically. But it would be more exact to speak of "methods" in Sunday-school teaching; for the pupils of our Sunday schools cover so wide a range of age and intelligence, and the study of the Bible itself includes so many different specific kinds of study, that it is highly improbable that the same method is equally adapted to all classes and all subjects. Nor is it good pedagogy to leave the choice of method to chance or the mere instinct of the teacher. A "natural teacher" will accomplish much by any method, and will to a certain extent instinctively adjust his method to the particular problem presented by a given lesson and a given class; but not all

teachers are "natural teachers," and even for those who are such, instinctive, unreflecting adjustment of means to end can hardly do the work of reflection and intelligence. Sunday-school teaching is a work of too much importance to be done with any less than the most intelligent possible adjustment of methods to existing conditions and ends in view.

Classification of methods

What, then, are the possible methods of so conducting a Sunday-school class as to make one's teaching actually effective? Leaving out of account for the present the very youngest scholars, we may name four methods which singly or in combination may be employed in Sunday-school teaching: the recitation method, the conversation method, the lecture method, the seminar method.

1. The recitation method

1. The *recitation method* presupposes the assignment of specific tasks and the report of the pupil upon those tasks, either orally or in writing. It naturally implies a text-book or something equivalent to it. Such a text-book may be the Bible itself, portions of which are committed to memory and recited in the class. It may be a "lesson quarterly" containing questions to be studied at home and answered in class. It may be some book on biblical history or biblical teaching in which the content of the Bible is presented in a form for study and recitation. Reci-

tation may be oral or written, or partly one and partly the other. The central aim, intellectually speaking, of the recitation method is to induce the pupil to study the lesson before coming to the class, and the chief use of the lesson-hour, again speaking from the intellectual point of view, and ignoring, though by no means undervaluing, the spiritual and religious aim which is dominant in the whole process, is to hear the pupils' answers, approving those that are right and correcting those that are wrong. The work of instruction, in the exact sense of the word, is reduced to a minimum by such a method strictly applied. The teacher is not so much an instructor as a quiz-master, though by no means necessarily in an offensive sense of the term. His duty is not so much to teach the pupil as to see that the pupil learns what is set him to learn. The great advantage of such a method is that, given a good text-book and a faithful application of the method, the pupil is sure to get some real and valuable information, some weekly addition to his store of biblical knowledge. Nor is the function of the teacher a menial one. To induce the pupil to study, so to conduct the lesson-hour that he will be interested and ambitious to prepare his lesson beforehand, and that the recitation of it will be interesting and illuminating, setting the facts in clearer light and impressing

Purpose of the recitation

them more deeply on his mind—all this is work which is much above the menial level, and may tax to the utmost the ingenuity and ability of even a bright and earnest teacher.

Danger of mechanical treatment of the lesson

The chief dangers of such a method are two. On the one side there is the danger of a rigid, mechanical, unsympathetic way of employing it. A Sunday-school teacher—the same danger exists in the teaching of arithmetic and geography—who comes to his work with no knowledge of the subject beyond that contained in the specific lesson assiged in the text-book, who has no insight and no outlook, may indeed put the questions set down to be answered, or call for a recitation of the matter assigned to be learned, but he can never be a true teacher. No amount of strictness in enforcing set tasks can supply the place of enthusiastic interest in the subject and the pupils. Such interest and enthusiasm are especially needful in Sunday-school teaching, where the things taught depend so much for their effectiveness on the spirit in which they are taught, and where even the retention of the pupil in the school is often dependent, not on parental authority, but on the maintenance of his interest in his work.

But an even greater danger, and one which is much oftener realized in experience, is that the recitation method shall prove ineffective through

a lax and unskilful use of it. In multitudes of classes in which this method is supposed to be employed, the class being supplied with a text-book and the text-book itself being constructed for this method and for no other, there is scarcely a pretense of real study beforehand, or of real recitation in the class. The teacher does not expect the pupil to prepare the lesson beforehand; and the pupil does not disappoint the teacher's expectation. If the lesson calls for written answers, the teacher neither has such answers read in the class nor examines them afterward. If there are questions to be answered orally, these are read off to the class in general, not addressed to any particular pupil; they are answered by the one or two pupils in the class whose general biblical knowledge enables them to make an extempore reply, and the exercise closes with a few earnest remarks of a religious purpose, the force of which is largely lost because they have no root or basis in the questioning and answering that have preceded, and there has been no preparation of the soil of the mind to receive spiritual truth. Anything much more profitless than this, more calculated to discourage study and to give the pupils a distaste for the Sunday school, for the study of the Bible, and for the Bible itself, it would be hard to devise.

Danger of carelessness on part of the teacher

The fault, however, in both these cases lies

not chiefly in the method, but in the unskilful or negligent employment of it. The recitation method, either alone or as the chief element of a combination of methods, is the best yet devised for pupils between the ages of eight and sixteen. What is needed is intelligence, enthusiasm, conscientiousness in the employment of it.

2. The conversation method

2. The distinctive characteristic of the *conversation method* is that it substitutes extempore questioning and discussion for assigned tasks. Instead of finding out what the pupil has already learned, the teacher sets him to thinking and studying on the spot, leads him by a Socratic process of questioning to perceive the facts and to see the truth in the lesson as he could not have seen it beforehand. The teacher in this case *teaches*, not simply hears the pupil recite.

In the hands of a skilful teacher this method can be made both very attractive and very instructive, even for a class which has not studied the lesson at all beforehand. But this very fact suggests one of the dangers of such a method. Because it can be used without previous study on the part of the class, because it is more interesting than the hearing of recitations, there is a constant tendency on the part of the pupils to neglect preparation, and on the part of the teacher to allow them to do so. And when this danger is actually realized, it easily opens the

door for another, viz., the degeneration from real Socratic instruction into mere desultory conversation. The lack of preparation on the part of the pupil makes impossible the best kind of teaching. The teacher is first compelled and then contented to move on the mere surface of the matter, and the method, at first resorted to in order to make the exercise more interesting than a recitation, ends by being more dull and more unprofitable than the most rigid kind of reciting. Almost any person of wide observation in Sunday-school work must have seen illustrations of precisely these results.

Danger of degeneration into desultory talk

The way of escape from these dangers of the conversation method is obvious. It ought never to be used singly and alone, save for a class of adults who for some reason cannot be induced to study the lesson beforehand. In such a case a skilful teacher can compel his pupils to study with him for the hour of the class-meeting, though they will not do it beforehand, and may, by constant watchfulness, keep the work from degenerating into desultory discussion of unimportant or irrelevant matters. But for a class made up of pupils capable of being induced to study beforehand, the conversation method should always be accompanied by some elements of the recitation method. The pupil should have definite work to do beforehand and should be

The conversation should be supplemented by other methods

given an opportunity to show that he has done it. This may be accomplished in various ways. The simplest way, and perhaps the poorest, is to divide the hour, spending a part of it in recitation, a part in discussion. Another method which a skilful teacher may use is in the course of discussion to test the pupil's preparation and thus stimulate him always to come prepared. Still another way, of which much more use might be made than is usually the case, is to assign certain questions beforehand to be answered in writing. In this case it is indispensable that the teacher should read these answers, and hand them back to the pupil with suggestions and corrections.

Advantages of combining methods

These and other means which will suggest themselves to ingenious teachers may be employed to stimulate and guide the pupil in his study outside the class-hour, and so to prevent the intellectual and moral degeneration of the class-work.

What has been said sufficiently indicates that neither the recitation method nor the conversation method is satisfactory alone, but each requires complementing by the other, and that neither method alone, nor both methods together, can be successfully employed without common-sense, industry, ingenuity, and sympathy on the part of the teacher.

The two methods thus far discussed—the

recitation method and the conversation method —are specially adapted to the classes of the secondary division, made up of pupils from eight or ten to eighteen years of age. It remains to speak of methods specially adapted to adult classes.

3. In the *lecture method*, pure and simple, the teacher demands no preparation on the part of his pupils, and in the conduct of the class calls for no recitation and asks no questions. He instructs by conveying information, with or without application of that which is taught to personal conduct and current ethical problems. 3. The lecture method

In proportion as the element of application is prominent the lecture approximates to a sermon. Some of the best teaching of adult classes that we have in Sunday schools today is simply good expository preaching. We cannot have too much of it, unless it displaces something still better. It is especially adapted to large classes in city churches. For its successful employment it is necessary that the class should have a room by itself, that the teacher should be a well-informed student of the Bible, that he should be a good speaker and skilful in handling an audience. It has the great advantage that it makes it possible to employ for the instruction of a large number of hearers the best teacher the church possesses for this kind of work, instead

of dividing the pupils among several teachers of inferior ability. It tends to silence those well-meaning hobby-riders who are likely to be found in almost any adult class conducted on the conversational method, and who are continually diverting the discussion from its legitimate channel to irrelevant and unprofitable themes. Given a good teacher, such a class can often draw more adults into the Sunday school than any number of small classes conducted on a different method could do, both because the teaching is better than it would be in the small classes and because there is a freedom from any danger of being called on to expose one's ignorance. There are probably few Sunday schools of any size which ought not to have at least one class conducted avowedly and invariably on the lecture method, provided only a competent teacher can be obtained. It is even to be counted among the advantages of such a method that, if the teacher is not competent, he cannot long hold his class.

Its advantages in adult classes

But the limitations of this method are as obvious and real as its advantages. It is but little calculated to induce the pupil to study. Now and then a lecturer may make the Bible so interesting as to stimulate studious hearers to study it for themselves. But most people are as lazy

Difficulties in the method

as circumstances permit, or too busy to do for themselves what others will do for them. And expository preaching is only less calculated than other kinds of preaching to encourage hearers to take their spiritual nourishment from the hands of the preacher rather than to search it out for themselves. At best the lecture method is but a concession to preoccupation, or to ignorance, or — alas! that it must be said — to laziness; a necessary one, but still a concession.

Possible combinations of the three methods

To some extent the defects of this method of teaching may be corrected by combining with it some of the features either of the recitation or of the conversational method. Thus particular themes may be assigned to certain members of the class for special study, reports of their reading being presented before the next lecture. Or printed questions may be given out to be answered in writing, the papers being corrected and returned. But these very improvements of the lecture method tend, unless managed with care and skill, to destroy the advantages of the method itself. And the lecture method must remain subject to the great disadvantage that it tends but slightly to encourage real study.

4. But what is the best method for advanced classes made up of those who are not beyond all hope of becoming real students of the Bible? The teaching of the Bible in academies and col-

leges is producing — we hope the improvement in the pedagogical methods of the Sunday school is going to produce — a class of real Bible students in our churches. These people will want to continue their study of the Bible beyond the age of youth, but they will want it to be real study; not mere talk, however interesting. For this class, already existing in our churches, and destined, we hope, constantly to increase, we are persuaded that there is needed a method different from any that we have thus far described. For lack of a better title we shall call it, using a German name, the *seminar method.* A seminar is a group of students pursuing investigative study under leadership. The pupil has tasks assigned, as in the recitation method, but the task is one, not of memorizing, but of investigation; not of mere acquisition, but of discovery. If, for example, the subject of study is the religious ideas of the prophet Isaiah, the student is neither set to learn these ideas from a text-book, in which someone has formulated them for him, nor gently led to perceive them through a conversational discussion of the book of Isaiah, nor informed concerning them in a lecture; but is sent direct to the prophecies of Isaiah, with instruction to discover and report to the class what he finds to be the ideas of the prophet on this or that theme which is specially assigned to him. The same method

4. The seminar method

is applicable to a multitude of similar subjects, such as the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, the ethical teachings of Jesus, the theology of Paul. Such a method, sufficiently simplified and applied to carefully selected subjects, is practicable even with pupils of the high-school or college age. But it is evident that its chief field is among somewhat mature pupils, and especially among those who are intellectually mature. Indeed, there is no class to whom it would be less applicable than to adults of untrained mind. It might be so simplified that it could be used with children; its use with people who have lost the flexibility of the youthful mind without gaining the strength of a trained mind would be quite impossible. Even if they were not utterly baffled by the impossibility of assuming the attitude of mind required for investigation they would be almost certain to study, not for the purpose of discovering truths and facts, but for that of establishing opinions already accepted or of disproving those already rejected.

The method not adapted to all

It is equally evident that such a method demands thoroughly competent and trained teachers. Young people who have never themselves been taught by anything but a text-book or lecture method are incompetent to become the leaders of classes pursuing investigative work. There are many Sunday schools in which work of this

kind cannot be done, because they have absolutely no teacher capable of conducting it; perhaps there are very few schools in which it can be done. The same statement applies, only less sweepingly, to the lecture method. Even the pastor is in many cases incapable, not from lack of time only, but from lack of training, of doing either of these kinds of work well. That this is so simply emphasizes the fact that our Sunday schools are still a long distance from their goal, and that there is pressing need of schools—we do not mean now Sunday schools, but colleges or seminaries—in which men and women shall be trained for this higher order of teaching. But in some of our churches there are men and women possessing the requisite scholarship and the requisite skill in teaching either to conduct a lecture-class or to lead an investigative class. Such men and women ought to be used, both for the general instruction of the church and the education of those who are themselves to be teachers.

The need of trained teachers

Would it not be a profitable exercise for every Sunday-school teacher to scrutinize his own method of teaching, inquiring of what type, or what mixture of types, it is, and whether it is the one that is best adapted to the class and the subject he is teaching, and whether he is employing it so as to avoid its dangers and to gain its advantages? Might it not be a useful exercise for

A suggestion to superintendents

the superintendent to inquire what methods of teaching are in use in his school, whether the methods employed are the best for the classes in which they are used, whether some new methods might not be employed, and whether the introduction of these methods might not bring into the school some persons who are not now drawn by the methods in use? Have you a lecture-class in your school? Is the teacher a good lecturer? Have you an investigative class? Have you the material to make one and a teacher to conduct it?

CHAPTER VI.

METHOD AS DETERMINED BY THE SUBJECT OF STUDY.

WHATEVER particular form of teaching one may choose as adapted to the character of one's class and one's own ability, there will always remain necessary a certain adaptation of method to the subject taught. Thus there will arise the query as to how best to teach the chief elements of biblical study, geography, history, prophecy, poetry, and epistle.

1. The study of scriptural geography

1. *The teaching of biblical geography.*—So overlaid have all scriptural matters become with various strata of theology and religious comment that it is exceedingly difficult for most readers of the Bible to set matters in their actual connections. Especially true is it that few persons are in the habit of studying the Bible with any thought of its geographical relations.

Allegorical geography

The cause is evident. In a way that finds almost no parallel except the Sacred Mountain of the Japanese, the physical characteristics of Palestine have worked their way into the vocabulary of Christian experience. We should expect that the recollection of the rôle which their rivers and their mountains and valleys had

played in their history would have made them in the eyes of the Hebrew poets the veritable representative and symbol of the experiences themselves. And since all of these experiences were traced back directly to Jehovah, it would be easy to see how, when the mountains and the hills and the valleys were substituted for the experiences, they might at the same time come to stand for Jehovah's dealings with his people. Yet, singularly enough, this is by no means as common in the Old Testament itself as in Christian literature. The people who lived by the side of the Jordan saw in it a very real boundary between very real fields. The religious poet of today, forgetting the fact that the Jordan is a stream with a traceable bed and a geological history, thinks of it only as a symbol of that river of death through which one must pass to reach a heavenly Promised Land. The same thing is true of Zion. By a sort of allegorizing process, that oriental town, whose splendors at their best must have been small compared with those of many a modern city, but which was the stronghold of Jehovah's people, has come to mean the heaven above and all that is religious here on earth; while the desert has become sin; the Hivites, the Perrizites, and the Jebusites, temptations which the believer is to overcome; and Canaan, eternal salvation.

This a modern phenomenon

Dangers in such allegorizing

Whatever one may say in justification of this method of treating the Scriptures, it is hardly necessary to call attention to the danger to which it is exposed because of the teacher's intellectual laziness. It cannot be too often emphasized that the Bible is not only a history of events, but the record of a nation's interpretation of God's dealings with it. But history walks upon the earth, not upon allegory, and if one would understand the history of the Israelites one must know the land in which the Israelites lived. The battles of Deborah and Gideon would have been very different had they been fought in Judea, and it would have been impossible for the events of David's early life to have occurred even on the mountains of Gilboa. The kingdom of Judah would have fallen as soon as the kingdom of Israel, if Jerusalem had been a second Samaria, and Hellenism might have stamped out the Law, if the mountains of the land had been without caves.

Political geography and the New Testament

How, too, is it possible for one to appreciate fully the diversities in the life of Jesus unless it be remembered that the several portions of his ministry were spent in different parts of the land? Who fully understands the method of Jesus' work in Galilee who cannot approximately locate the cities of the lake and their relations with the surrounding country? Indeed, so closely is his life

united with the political history of Palestine that one cannot fully understand his birth, boyhood, success, retreat, arrest, and trial without knowing the boundaries and the political conditions of Judea and Galilee. In a certain sense the same is true of the brief career, the arrest, and the death of John the Baptist. In the case of Paul the assistance given by good geographical information is even more marked. Paul was a wanderer whose methods, and to some extent whose preaching, took on the color of the various civilizations, and even cities, in which he labored. To make his letter to the Ephesians fit the needs of the Galatians would be as impossible as to identify the customs of Antioch in Pisidia with the customs of Ephesus. To say nothing of the apologetic value of the new light thrown upon the accuracy of Luke, it is no small exegetical help that has already been derived from the discussion of the purely geographical question as to the location of the Galatian churches and the extent of Galatia as a province of the Roman empire.

Further value of the study of biblical geography

It is imperative that the teacher accustom his class to the use of maps. Every place mentioned in the lesson should be carefully located. If there are journeys or battles to be considered, have the pupils notice every feature likely to explain them. Let the distances be estimated and

then compared with those with which the pupil is familiar. As far as possible have the pupil draw his own map, indicating on it such places as his study may have brought to his attention. Help him to connect historical events with localities, and as far as possible through photographs see that he gets a correct idea of what such places resemble. For the younger pupils it will be found a good expedient to devote several lessons to an imaginary journey to Palestine. Nothing will better serve to stimulate their interest in the land or to help them realize its characteristics.

Physical geography a factor in Israel's history

In fact the teaching of the geography of Palestine may be made full of suggestions as to the history and development of Israel. With the aid of a raised map, or by having one's pupils construct a model from sand, the form and shape of the little land may be easily seen. Immediately its hills and gorges, its interlacing watersheds, its few opportunities for roads to bind Judea with Galilee, will give one a new appreciation of the work of both prophet and priest. It will appear that the persistence and the development of the belief in Jēhovah as one ethical and supreme God were in direct opposition to the forces which nature set at work in a land where every hill was an invitation to polytheism. And yet Israel, through the dis-

cipline of prophet and God, became the founder of the world's great monotheism. So, too, with a little effort the teacher can show his class how the changing seasons, the ever-returning west wind, the rains and droughts, the stony ground that is yet so fertile, the springs and water-courses, while all alike serving admirably the poet and preacher, had a direct influence in determining the character of the Jew himself. And if of the Jew, then of Christianity.

2. *The teaching of biblical history.*—Speaking generally, narrative material, in so far as it is not fiction, may be grouped into two great classes —biography and history. The first concerns itself with the doings of some person as a mere individual; the second deals with the life of a social group like a city or nation. Very frequently, however, it is difficult to draw this line with any precision. Individuals get their significance chiefly from their connection with some social group, and nations are composed of and are led by individuals. Sometimes, indeed, so intimately was a man's life joined with the events of his time that his biography is the history of his epoch, and to write the one is to write the other. Yet, even in such cases, biography differs from history. It is more interested in the individual as such, and will narrate at length events which, though of no appreciable social or political influ-

2. History and biography

ence, are of very great interest and importance as indicative of the person's characteristics.

The biographical history of the Bible

In the Bible, except in the case of the gospels, it is all but impossible to make the distinction between the two sets of narratives. On the one hand, so fixed were the eyes of writers upon the development of Israel, rather than of individuals, that, with the exception of Jesus, biography as such is all but lacking. Men's lives and deeds are described almost invariably because they had some influence upon, or at least connection with, the history of a nation or of a church. On the other hand, history is always traced as it was made by heroes or unmade by sinners. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Ahab, Elijah, Nehemiah, Jesus, Paul—to tell the story of these lives is to write the history of biblical times.

Stories for children

In this biographical-historical character of the narrative portion of the Bible lies a great pedagogical advantage. By exploiting it a teacher may adapt his instruction to the maturity or immaturity of the pupils with whom he may be called to deal. The teacher of very young pupils will find in the Old Testament an abundance of material which he may use as stories. Little children require hardly any other form of lesson material. With them the effort should be to make such stories of men and women as vivid as pos-

sible, in total disregard of everything except the dramatic quality. Such stories will carry their own moral lessons quite as effectively as the most approved nursery tales.

Biographical stories for boys and girls

With pupils of the public-school age, approximately from seven to thirteen, it will be advisable to dwell chiefly upon the biographical rather than the historical element in the biblical narrative. Let the attention be centered upon the lives of the heroes of Scripture. If these are taught in the spirit of the biblical writers themselves, nothing is more instructive. The teacher not only has material that will readily appeal to his young pupils, but he has its religious and moral values already expressed. Virtues and their counterparts are never so distinct in the minds of children as when seen in the actual lives of men and women.

Biographical history for adolescents

The real task for the teacher in this connection, however, comes when he has to deal with the boys and girls of high-school age. In their case the newly awakened critical judgment, the new sense of social relations, the irresistible impulse to generalize—in a word, the entire new world of adolescence—make demands that are not to be met by mere stories or mere biography. They not only require facts, they wish to see the relation and the significance of facts. Quite as much, also, do they need to be taught

to grasp the real meaning of biblical narratives, to distinguish between a folk-tale of a bygone age and sober history, to form opinions as to the historical value of the Bible that will be a source of confidence rather than of uncertainty as they reach maturity. Yet with these pupils, as with the others, the teacher can well afford to approach the biblical narratives from the point of view of their authors. If they are historical, they are also biographical.

Suggestions for teachers: (*a*) Make heroes central

From this fact comes the first suggestion for teachers of these and even more advanced classes; let the study of biblical narratives be biographical. That it to say, the individual should be made the center of interest, and the affairs of Israel or the early church should be grouped about leading and significant men. How much help lies in such a method must be at once evident. Boys and girls even of the high-school age have not the interest in social forces and laws which their elders possess. They want heroes, not philosophy. And heroes the Bible gives in profusion. The deeds of Gideon and David, of Jesus and Paul, if only they are taught without undue moralizing or exhortation, can never fail to interest the young. In their daily lessons in their schools they learn to admire the great men of their own and other lands, but where in all history are there more dramatic,

more human, more inspiring characters than one finds described with marvelous literary skill in the Bible? There are few teachers who will not testify to the relief with which they welcome lessons dealing with the men of the Scriptures, and to the unaccustomed zest with which a restless class of boys or a politely indifferent class of girls listens to and even studies stories like those of Joseph and Ruth.

(*b*) Let heroes illustrate their times

A second suggestion also comes from the biblical material: Study these biographies as illustrating or embodying the important social characteristics of a period. This is precisely why these persons appear on the pages of the Bible; so to use them is but to follow the plan of the biblical writer. To show the truth of this it is not necessary to recall those long genealogical chapters of Genesis where tribes appear in the guise of individuals: any Old Testament character may serve as example. How can one study the different periods of David's life without seeing that each is the result of some condition of the Hebrew people? So, too, in the case of Paul, how can one trace his career without seeing clearly the changing situations in apostolic Christianity? If one wishes to help a class of boys and girls to realize how all history is a record of the struggle of opposing tendencies and ideals how better can it be done than by putting

over against each other the lives of Elijah and Ahab? Is not the teacher in the public school doing precisely the same when he helps his pupils understand the history of England by interesting them in English sovereigns?

The value of archæology

To make such comparisons real, the teacher should use the fascinating results of archæology. The libraries of Babylon, the correspondence of Tell Amarna, the colonnades of the Decapolis, the temples of innumerable cities, the tombs of Egypt, the long-buried, superimposed cities of Palestine and Asia Minor, are treasure-houses for almost any period of biblical history one may study; and now that they are all so readily available through literature and photographs, to neglect them is as inexcusable as it is impolitic.

Indeed, the well-trained teacher may even venture farther with an exceptionally bright class. The slow development of nomadic clans into a nation can be no better illustrated by recourse to the German tribes as they overran Gaul and Italy than to the Hebrew tribes as they overran Palestine and slowly felt their way through the dark ages of the Judges into the short-lived national unity under David and Solomon. In the case of each people the different political or economic stages are to be studied through the adventures of some representative man or woman. Once let the ambitious Sunday-school teacher

experiment with this method of teaching biblical history, and he will be surprised at the results both in his class and in himself.

(*c*) Compare the biblical with the history studied in schools

And this suggests a third direction: As far as possible teach biblical history comparatively. That is, endeavor to find parallels between it and the history the members of one's class may be studying in the high school. So well arranged have the curricula of most such schools become that it is seldom that their pupils are not concerned with Rome or Greece, England or America. As has already been implied, parallels between the Hebrew history and that of other nations are always easy to discover, and to discuss them, to bring bright pupils to argue over them, is one of the easiest and most fruitful of methods. Ask, for instance, a class whose members are deep in Roman history to compare the story of Romulus and the founding of Rome with the Genesis account of Abraham and the founding of the Hebrew nation. A little preparatory analysis of the two matters on the part of the teacher will lead to a series of questions that will not only test the pupils' knowledge of the facts involved, but will stimulate his judgment and imagination, and thus become of genuine pedagogical value. Similarly, pupils who during the week are studying American history may be led to compare the French and Indian

Wars with the struggle of the Israelites with the Philistines, and the Revolution with the revolt of Rhehoboam. For more advanced pupils a most illuminating comparison is that of the growth of the messianic idea with that of the doctrine of rights in France during the eighteenth century. Other comparisons will readily suggest themselves to any teacher who has even a moderate amount of historical insight and pedagogical aptitude.

(*d*) Show that literature springs from historical conditions

A fourth suggestion is this: Show how the spirit of an age always expresses itself in the literature of the age. Here again the comparative method may be used to advantage with classes studying English literature in the public schools. The teacher should endeavor to appreciate and get his pupils to appreciate the fact that war and bloodshed no more constitute the entirety of Hebrew than of English history, and that, in one as in the other, literature is but one form taken by the spirit that lay back of and in no small way accounted for the course of outer events. It is from this point, indeed, that one may well teach the pupil to approach the Bible itself; for it is, so to speak, the literary residuum of the best spirit of the Hebrew people. To see it thus through the medium of the different periods in which it was written is not only to move toward a better understanding of its teaching; it is also to come to an appreciation of its

real character as the record and the product of a progressive revelation of the divine will through human life. And this, as has already been urged, is an indispensable prerequisite of all proper biblical teaching.

(*e*) Teach with a consciousness the entire sweep of biblical history

A fifth suggestion applies especially to the more advanced classes, and can be fully adopted only with pupils who have pursued their biblical study according to an intelligently constructed curriculum, or who have been otherwise exceptionally well trained. Under such exceptional circumstances, however, it is of the highest importance to trace the onward movement and broad sweep of events in the light of which the larger connections and larger meanings of biblical history may be discerned. The deepest significance of Israel's history is perceived only when in the century-long sweep of that history one discerns the outlines of that educational process by which the people rose to those nobler ideals of God and the higher standard of morality which made them unique among the nations. The intense career of Jesus — so brief as compared with the centuries of Israelitish history, so significant as giving to that history its deepest significance — is adequately understood only as it is seen in its entirety. The Apostolic Age loses most of its value for us when we take a mere atomistic view of its successive events. And he has still to

reach the highest achievement of the historical study of the Bible who has not seen in all these — the history of Israel, the life of the Christ, the birth and infancy of the Christian community — in one broad view, a vision of the gradual self-revelation of God to men and of the divine education of men to live according to divine ideals. Obviously this suggestion cannot be applied to the teaching of individual lessons. Not less surely will he fail really to adopt it who with dim and hazy ideas of the biblical history substitutes eloquence for solid instruction. But the teaching of biblical history can never be wholly what it should be, even for the Sunday school, till by aid of a properly constructed curriculum and adequate text-books it can culminate in some such broad view as we have endeavored to describe. Meantime the teacher who can get something of this view for himself may now and then give to his pupils also an inspiring and uplifting glimpse of it.

3. The teaching of prophecy

3. *The teaching of prophecy.* — Growing directly out of this method of teaching the history of the Bible is that of teaching the prophecies. They too must be approached from the historical side. Men like Isaiah and Jeremiah were not interested in events that were to happen thousands of years after their death; they were foretelling to men of their own time the certain outcome of national

sins and virtues, of certain punishments and rewards, of Jehovah's love and justice. To disassociate their work from the political situations in which they lived is utterly to misunderstand them. Accordingly, if one is to teach the prophecies, two fundamental rules must be observed.

Prophecy embedded in history

In the first place, the teacher must realize, and help his pupils to realize, as distinctly as possible, the historical circumstances in which a prophet spoke. Especially must the international relations of Israel with its neighbors be emphasized, particularly with Assyria and Egypt. The prophets spoke less to individuals than to nations, and many of their addresses are unintelligible except as this is recognized by the interpreter. To present this one fact is likely to arouse interest, and this may be deepened by leading the pupils to attempt a comparison of these Hebrew preachers with their modern representatives, ministers, social reformers, and political leaders. A careful balancing of similarities and differences between the ancient world and the modern, the biblical prophet and the modern preacher, will go far to assist one's pupils to understand the function and dignity of both. Possibly there may come also a new appreciation of the difficulties under which religious teachers of all ages have been forced to labor.

Therefore, (*a*) Appreciate the historical circumstances from which a prophecy sprang

(*b*) Show the superiority of the prophets to their times

In the second place, the pupils should be taught to see how far in advance of the times in which he lived were the words of the prophet. Nor will this be difficult when once he has realized the historical element in prophecy. The unfaithfulness of Israel to Jehovah, the national degeneracy, the incursion of heathen customs and ideals, the low morality of king and people as it appears in the prophetic denunciation and description—these and other elements which a truly historical study will reveal combine to emphasize the philosophy of suffering, the pictures of a forgiving God, the hope of a brighter day, and the certainty of a deliverer with which the prophecies abound. As this aspect of the prophet's work grows distinct, it gains a new significance. It ceases to be enigmatic foretelling and becomes full of permanent moral teaching. Its forecast of the future, so different from the career of historic Israel, carries one's mind over to some better lesson than mechanical "fulfilment" and shows with new distinctness how the life of Jesus meets prophetic ideals otherwise unsatisfied. Thus the actual work and significance of the prophet are understood, and his words are made modern by first being seen to be ancient. If, with advanced classes, this study be carried one step farther, and the effect of the prophetic impulse be traced in the legis-

lation of the later codes and the new kingdom that sprang up after the Return, the teacher will have the richest sort of material for illustrating the possibility of religion's influencing legislation and national ideals through the faith and self-sacrificing morality of individuals.

4. *The teaching of biblical poetry.*—Naturally the emphasis here will be laid less upon broad historical situations—although, whenever discoverable, they are by no means to be disregarded—than upon purely literary characteristics. Above all is it necessary to impress upon the pupil the fact that the poetry of the Bible, just as truly as that of any literature, has a real poetical form. In our English translations this form is too frequently obscured, but it is none the less present, and when once observed is not likely again to be overlooked. The absence of rhyme and—at least in the English version—rhythm cannot prevent the pupil's being shown the parallelism of thought, the balancing of opposing conceptions, the oftentimes elaborate structure of the Psalms, or the balanced sentences of the Proverbs and other literature dealing with wisdom. Nor is it difficult to induce a class to see that all Hebrew literature is full of imagery often bold and always beautiful; and when once this point of vantage is gained, the teaching of the poetical portions of the Bible is made both easy and fascinating.

4. The teaching of biblical poetry

Poetical form

Restore this form

It follows that the teacher will first of all set his class at restoring the lost literary form. This may be done in the way of preparing the lesson, or even in the class. When this has been done, he will ask for interpretations of the literary figures in which the thought is cast. If possible, he will endeavor to point out the circumstances under which the psalm was written or used. If it is a bit of wisdom, and especially if it is a saying of Jesus—for much of his teaching is in poetic form in the Hebrew sense—he will have his class formulate in literal terms the teaching they have discovered under the poetic form.

The study of apocalypses

The importance of this method will appear in strong light, should the teacher be forced to introduce his class into any of the apocalyptic portions of the Bible. Here it is, if possible, even more imperative than in the case of the Psalms, Proverbs, and Parables for class and teacher to realize that they are dealing with a literary form closely allied to poetry. In apocalyptic composition practically nothing is intended to be interpreted literally. The various creatures are symbols, the action is symbolical, places and persons are symbolical. To interpret such material requires something more than exegetical ingenuity; one must know the literary form itself, its method of teaching, the historical situation it seeks to portray, and the sort of deliverance it

promises. Altogether, the task is too great to lay upon the teacher of an average class of boys and girls. Yet if it is so laid, one rule may be regarded as inviolable: apocalyptic like all figurative material is not interpreted as long as any vestige of the original symbolizing descriptions is left. To interpret figurative teaching involves the utter destruction of the figures.

Study the spirit of the poet

Yet it would be a grievous mistake if the teacher should look at biblical poetry simply from the point of view of literary form. Nothing could be more deadening. Poetry above all forms of literature is expressive of life. To understand it one must look out on life with its author, one must sympathize with his feelings, one must look through his words into his heart and experience. The student of biblical poetry needs this spiritual sympathy. If ever a literature was not dilettante it is the Hebrew. Even Lamentations, despite its highly conventionalized form, rings true. The Hebrew psalm is as sincere as it is elevated. The teacher, accordingly, must seek to recover the biographical history, the "psychological moment" of the poetry he is bringing to his class. Generally this may be found in the poetry itself; sometimes in a definite historical circumstance. But always must the teacher endeavor to make his class realize the state of heart from which the poem sprang. There, if any-

where, will be the true entrance to its teaching and the point of contact between the man of the past and the boy or girl of the present.

5. The teaching of epistles

5. *The teaching of epistles.*—We have already made a number of suggestions which may show how a teacher can study this element of the Bible, and it is necessary now only to call attention to the fact that here again he must recognize the need of leading his class to appreciate the situation from which the New Testament epistles sprang as actual letters from one person to another person or to a group of persons. In several cases, of course, it is all but impossible to reach specific and final conclusions in such matters, but the epistles of which this is true may well be reserved for very advanced classes. In the case of the Pauline literature it is possible to construct the historical situation with fulness and accuracy and, as has already been indicated, often from a study of the epistle itself. As a general principle of study, these epistles ought to be treated in connection with the life of Paul, but, as this is very often impracticable, it will be the duty of the teacher to show what material in Acts supplements the testimony of the letter itself to its occasion and purpose, and throws especial light on the epistle or portion of an epistle under consideration. At all costs the pupil should be made to see that the epistles, as far as the pur-

pose of their authors was concerned, were written, not to serve as systems of theological teaching for endless ages, but to meet certain definite needs of the persons to whom they were sent, and that the whole question of their relation to modern life must be answered through a recognition of their purpose. It is a great step toward the proper use of the New Testament for practical religious purposes when one comes to realize that many of the apostolic directions for Christian conduct were adapted primarily and exclusively to Christians living in Græco-Roman cities nearly two thousand years ago. But it is idle to hope to appreciate accurately this element in the apostolic literature until one appreciates the actual historical environment in which it arose.

The real purpose of the epistles

To some persons it may seem that this methodical study of the Scriptures will work against the fundamentally religious purpose of the Sunday school. For such apprehensions we have the deepest sympathy. It would be a most disastrous change if the Sunday school should become a mere school of archæology or of pedagogical method. To those who feel these apprehensions it is to be answered, in the first place, that the methods of teaching which we have been describing in this chapter are not guaranteed in and of themselves to make the teacher in the

A possible objection: Is this method religiously effective?

fullest sense successful. These methods pertain to the intellectual side of his work. But the teacher must be something more than intellectually acute, or in a narrow sense pedagogically skilful. It would be quite possible to teach the Bible with great acuteness and with a high degree of skill of a certain sort without making it religiously effective. It is for this reason that we speak at length in another chapter of the ways in which a teacher can render his work religiously effective.

The Sunday school must be educational

But, dismissing that side of the matter for the moment, it is also to be said, as we have maintained at the outset, that the Sunday school, as an educational institution controlled by a distinctly religious purpose, must and will achieve its highest religious purpose by being true to its educational as well as to its religious ideals. You cannot make the Sunday school more effective religiously by leaving it inefficient educationally. The educational and religious phases of the school are not rivals, but respectively means and end. To strengthen the means is, other things being equal, to promote the end. Granting that the methods which we have been advocating are good methods pedagogically, the question reduces itself to this: Will better instruction prove less effective religiously than poor instruction?

Now, on this question we are not forced to

rely wholly on *a priori* consideration. We have some data of experience on which to base an opinion. There are in every Sunday school teachers who not only exert a strong personal influence over their pupils, but who conscientiously study their lessons and induce the members of their classes to do the same. They are interested in the great truths of revelation, but they are also interested in the Bible as a channel of such revelation. Their interest begets interest, and their classes acquire biblical knowledge as well as religious inspiration. Would any person acquainted with the work of such teachers question that its results are more permanent than any other sort of teaching? Or affirm that the pupils thus instructed are with any more difficulty brought to a decision to lead religious lives, or are any more prone to indifference?

Experience has shown the religious efficiency of good teaching

And then, too, there is the steadily increasing number of Sunday schools in which a serious effort is being made to bring biblical instruction to the level, pedagogically speaking, of the day school—schools that grade, examine, actually teach their pupils. If the testimony that reaches us from such schools means anything, it is that throughout the entire body of pupils there is a deepening religious interest as well as a more thorough mastering of the Bible as a whole rather than of some particular text.

Are we afraid that the Bible is religiously ineffective?

Does not a doubt of the advisability of better study and teaching of the Bible in reality approach a suspicion of the power of truth? May it not be that, if young minds were less entertained, less exhorted, less filled with stories, more instructed in the contents and meaning of the Bible, they would be more ready to appreciate the progressive revelation whose record is so clear in the Scriptures? We have no quarrel with the institutionalizing of the Sunday school; on the contrary, every attempt to awaken *esprit de corps* appears to us most advisable. But all this must subserve instruction. It should never be made an end in itself. Unless one has a supreme confidence in the power of divine truth to accomplish its mission, it is idle to attempt to teach. But if one has such confidence, and if teaching is really worth while, why not teach in the right way, and why not organize a school in ways which experience has shown makes teaching the more effective?

Why fear to use good methods?

If the Bible is what we all believe it to be, there can be no danger in attempting to induce young minds actually to study its truths. If pedagogy is worth anything, it is uneconomical not to employ its conclusions and methods in such instruction. If religious truth has any power, there is no need to fear lest, if it be properly taught and properly studied, it will lose any of

its capacity to bring boys and girls to a decision to stand for it and the God who gave it.

Why be apprehensive lest a good tree should bring forth bad fruit?

CHAPTER VII.

HOW TO INDUCE A PUPIL TO STUDY.

The problem of getting Sunday-school pupils to study

NEXT to that of his own preparation, perhaps as difficult a problem as any that confronts the ambitious teacher in the Sunday school is that of inducing his class to study the lesson out of school. And by study such a teacher means something more than the memorizing of verses of the Bible, or the acquiring of such a superficial knowledge of the general scope of biblical teaching as will enable the pupil to answer extemporaneously general questions as to morals and duty. Far less does a genuine teacher consider his work in a class successful when he has succeeded in keeping members within the bounds of reasonable order during a half-hour. One great need of Sunday schools today is such a method as will induce the pupils to apply themselves to the preparation of the lesson during the week — to work as faithfully over Josiah as they work over Washington.

Elements of difficulty in Sunday-school classes

The number of difficulties which here confront the teacher of a class of half-grown boys or girls is large. On the one side are the pupils, full of life, not especially appreciative of the importance

of religious instruction, with their thoughts filled with the events of the past week, uneasy, critical, and with minds most contradictorily acute and indifferent. On the other hand is the teacher, possessed of little or no authority, most probably with no special training for the task of teaching, not possessed, generally, of any very distinct idea as to what the office of teacher implies, but determined to maintain a reasonable amount of order, and, if possible, bring each member of the class to Christ. A third element is that of the lesson itself. Too often it is altogether unfitted for teaching purposes. Either the matter is too abstract, or it is too simple. An anecdote from the Old Testament, a few verses of a prophecy or of an epistle, taken out from its context and used as a basis of moral exhortation, are poor material from which to derive interest or wisdom.

Ignorance of the Bible

These three elements in combination go far to account for the lamentable fact that, notwithstanding years of instruction in a Sunday school, the rank and file of Christians, even of intelligent Christians, have no knowledge of the Bible worthy of the name, but in its place a mixture of confused information, ethical platitudes, good resolutions, and dense ignorance as to the actual teaching of prophets, apostles, and Christ.

But without just now discussing the quality of

teachers or the proper curriculum, let us assume that each is satisfactory; there is still left the very important question how actually to teach a class in the Sunday school itself.

First, take time

As regards this it should be said, first, that if any genuine teaching is to be done the period of teaching must be lengthened. The Sunday-school session of one hour, in which twenty minutes is given to opening exercises, twenty minutes to the lesson, and twenty minutes to closing addresses and songs, is almost useless for the study of the Bible. Ideally, a half-day is best, but, as things are, probably impracticable. Half an hour is the least time that should be given to the study of the lesson, and three-quarters of an hour or an hour is better. It is easy to feel the objection to this lengthening of the period. The teacher asks in despair: "What shall I do with my uneasy pupils during so long a time?" It would probably voice the feelings of many a teacher to say that one of the most welcome sounds of the Sunday-school session is the bell which marks the closing of the teaching period. But in fact the matter reduces itself to this alternative: Will or will not the teacher teach? If he is simply to amuse his class and administer such good advice, or make such exhortations, as the order of the class permits, twenty minutes is too long. He had better not teach at all. If

he is really to teach, twenty minutes is too short a time.

But dismissing the case of the teacher who cannot teach, let us assume that the teacher himself knows how to study, and has studied, and intends to teach his class to study. Let us further assume for example's sake that the class is composed of boys and girls of high-school age or a trifle younger. How shall such a teacher induce such pupils to study?

Appeal can sometimes be made to duty

In some cases it is probably possible to appeal to a sense of duty on the part of the pupil. Here, of course, the personal equation is very large. Some teachers have the power more easily than others to reach the conscience of their pupils. On the other hand, some pupils are more conscientious than others in their undertaking of tasks assigned them in the Sunday school. There is undoubtedly a moral discipline in arousing the pupil's sense of duty, but it is to be admitted that in the great majority of cases responsibility sits very light upon a member of a Sunday-school class, and even the sight of a teacher's careful preparation too often does little more than arouse the pupil's admiration.

But seldom to fear

In this connection there is suggested the one method which, primarily at least, has been efficient in the public schools; that is, the infliction of some sort of punishment for a failure to

prepare one's lesson properly. In rare cases, probably, punishment or penalty might be efficient, but the ties which hold a boy or girl to a Sunday school are so voluntary and weak, as compared with the compulsion which keeps pupils in the public school, that any large or general appeal to fear is likely to drive the pupil from the class altogether. Above all, scolding is the most successful means yet invented of depopulating a Sunday-school class.

Interest must be aroused—but in what?

But however much may be done by appeal to duty, however little by penalty or scolding, the fundamental effort of the teacher must be to awaken the interest of the pupil in the subject under consideration. In a voluntary class, such as is generally to be found in the Sunday school, this is practically the only method. Only it is to be borne in mind that the problem is not that of arousing interest in the teaching of the lesson by the teacher, and even less in the Sunday school or in the class. Each of these may be a means to the end, but the end is to arouse sufficient interest in the lesson itself to lead the pupils to study it. Any means by which the teacher can get a personal hold upon the affection of the pupil is, of course, to be commended. The organization of the class into a club which meets on week days for debates, illustrated lectures, or athletic sports has repeatedly proved a

great means of awakening an *esprit de corps* within a class, but even when the pupil is thus identified with the teacher and the Sunday school itself there remains the further difficulty of transmitting his social interest into a studious interest in the Bible. Another caution is to be borne in mind, and one which in the light of the so-called success of many teachers needs especial emphasis. Simply to amuse a class while the Sunday school is in session is not to arouse interest in the study of the lesson. It is the easiest thing in the world to amuse a Sunday-school class—to talk to the boys about football games, or talk to the girls about each other's dress, or tell funny stories, or even stories about the Bible. But a teacher who has merely amused his class is not a teacher. He has simply been an entertainer; he has cheapened his office. Even enthusiasm must be directed to tasks before it is efficient. Here there will be as many expedients as there are real teachers, and it is often true of a teacher, as of a poet, that he is born, not manufactured. None the less, pedagogy is as much an art as a science, and there are certain results of pedagogical experience that are unquestionably of service just at this point.

The teacher is not an entertainer

Let us assume that the lesson is adapted to the pupil, for unless this be the case the teacher will labor in vain. With this assumed,

First suggestion: Find point of contact

the first thing needed is some point of contact between the lesson and the pupil. To neglect this requirement is the first assurance of failure. The boy or girl—or, for that matter, the man or woman—who fails to see some particular relation between himself or herself and the lesson will never be induced to study. But once let some common ground of interest be established and the teacher's way is open. Here perhaps as much as at any point will be the test of the teacher's fitness for his work. He needs to begin where he can, not where he wishes to. The great thing is to begin. If this common ground of interest cannot be discovered, it must be made. Any hint or question may be appropriated. A class of restless boys was once transformed by its teacher's seizing upon some symptom of interest in the topography of Jerusalem. For a year those boys worked on the subject, and then were ready to study matters suggested by their own work. If one cannot have a precisely similar success, try some other approach, even if it be boys' interest in war and girls' interest in housekeeping.

Second suggestion: Study historically

In the second place, the pupil should be taught to see the lesson in its historical setting. Every approach to the lesson should be through biography or history. Prophecy is marvelously attractive when one appreciates the situation in

which the prophet spoke. Such historical setting must be something more than the mere description of what this king did and the other king did not do. The teacher must saturate his mind with the events, the life, with the conditions of the people, as well as with the mere dates. And this he must, by any possible means, get the pupil to do also, for if Christianity means anything it means that religious truth is to be understood through the revelation of God in actual human life. If the teacher makes a lesson from Isaiah or Paul abstract, it is *prima facie* evidence that his method is wrong. Human interest, when once felt, will kindle studious interest. As has already been urged, in making real this historical situation help can be gained from modern history, and especially from the history which the pupil is studying in the public school. In tracing this parallelism will also be found the key to the best possible "application," viz., a study of the applicability of the exact scriptural teaching to the conditions of today.

Third suggestion: Let task be definite

In the third place, let the pupil's task be specific. Indefinite requirements and expectations are the bane of most schools. Give each pupil a definite problem — not too hard — to work out. It may be, of course, that more than one pupil or the entire class may have the same problem, but let it be as human as possible, definite, and very

specific. If the teacher has prepared himself rationally, he will have found that the passage chosen for the coming Sunday's lesson is full of questions, which can be definitely assigned in advance to members of the class. The preparation of answers to these should be required, and the discussion of these answers should constitute the lesson. As far as possible questions and answers should be in writing. With such a method, if the teacher is reasonably master of the subject and is alive to the possibilities of his position, he may overcome the difficulties of even a very unwisely selected series of lessons. It may not even be necessary to use any series; the teacher may instead deal with some special phase of biblical study.

Let the class be co-operative

This assigned work should be something more than the mere reading of the Scriptures. Each pupil should be expected to contribute some definite element to the study of the lesson. Here the teacher's skill will be shown in the exploiting of each pupil's peculiarities and capacities. The lesson must be blocked out each Sunday in advance. No teacher can make a success of his work by simply telling the class that next Sunday they will take the next lesson in the quarterly. There should be as much care in assigning the lesson as in applying it. Let the last ten minutes of the session be devoted to outlining the work for each

pupil to do during the week. The pupil should be asked, for example, to bring information from his work in the public school during the week which shall illustrate the lesson, or, better, bring it into line with common life. If the lesson is upon Isaiah's attack upon the rich men, let the student be asked to bring in from the newspapers instances of modern attacks upon rich men, and then let the comparison between the prophet's method and that of the agitator be noticed. If the lesson is upon some piece of biographical matter, as, for example, the voyage of Paul, let the pupil be told to bring in something about the places which Paul visited, each pupil taking perhaps one city. So, similarly, in the matter of exegetical study. If the questions are made distinct enough, a class of boys and girls twelve years old can do an astonishing amount of downright exegetical study. Here it would be best, probably, for this work to be reported in writing. Then in the class let the various answers to the questions be discussed.

Fourth suggestion: Appreciate good work

In the treatment of these reports, written or oral, the teacher has the greatest opportunity for stimulating the ambition and the interest of the pupil. Just how he will treat them will depend very largely upon the character of the lesson and the character of the class. One thing a teacher will be careful not to do — indiscriminately blame

a pupil for poor but honest work. In fact, he must remember always that his chief object is constructive. At this point one must appeal to the strongest motives, and, as far as it can be done rightfully, to the pupil's ambition. In some cases it has proved highly advantageous to offer prizes for the best quality of work done during a certain period. In other cases it has been enough to rank the work brought in, as is done in the public schools, giving, perhaps, honorable mention for work of a certain grade. If the Sunday school is graded, it is possible to make the pupil's written work a basis for promotion. But at the same time that the appeal is made to ambition it is indispensable that the reasonableness and duty of a proper understanding of the Bible be also enforced. The main object is here to develop studious habits, not pride. If a teacher can get a pupil to undertake a series of tasks in successive weeks, that very fact will have engendered interest, or, at least, a habit that is quite as good. But the teacher himself should know how to use the results of the pupil's work. Simply to allow him to read his answers and then sit dumb and quiet — or, more probably, noisy and restless — while another is reading his report, will be not only to dampen interest, but to kill the class. When the pupil brings in the report of his work the second great duty of the teacher begins. He

Appeal to the pupil's ambition

The duty of the teacher

must take his pupils' results and combine them, explain them, apply them. Every lesson should be a unit, and, however varied the tasks assigned to each boy or girl, when their reports are made the teacher must make it evident to them that they have been co-working. By a proper placing of emphasis in this co-operation the teacher can lead the pupil so to master the religious and moral meaning of the Scripture as to be strengthened morally and religiously. If once the pupil has been led to study, he may well be expected to be interested in and devoted to the truth he has learned.

Study should arouse religious feelings

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TEACHER AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE PUPIL.

The Sunday school fundamentally religious in purpose

In previous chapters we have repeatedly laid down and emphasized the principle that the ultimate purpose of all Sunday-school teaching, as of all other parts of the work of the Sunday school, is religious. The conversion of the pupil and his development in Christian character are the ends for which the Sunday school exists. These ends are to be sought in the Sunday school mainly through instruction, and in particular through the teaching of the Bible. Mainly, we say, but not exclusively. The Sunday-school teacher is not simply a teacher. His religious influence on the pupil ought not to be limited, cannot be limited, to that which he brings to bear through the knowledge of the Bible which he imparts, or which the pupil under his instruction gains. He is, or ought to be, the friend and pastor of the pupil as well as his instructor. Whether he intend it or not, he will through his own character affect the character of his pupil. In a large proportion of cases certainly the teacher fails to make full use of his opportu-

nity if he does not by conscious and direct effort seek to exert on his pupil a helpful religious influence. These propositions we state dogmatically, without argument, believing that they will be accepted by our readers generally. It is not these that we propose to discuss, but rather the question *how* the teacher can most effectively make his relation to the pupil, whether as instructor or as friend, most conducive to the pupil's religious development.

How can teaching be made most effective religiously?

Consider, then, what the teacher can do in direct connection with his work of teaching. To guard against misapprehension, let that be repeated which has been previously insisted on in these pages, that that study and teaching of the Bible are not the most effective, religiously, which, disdaining to take time for interpretation, plunge headlong into application. Moral effect is to be obtained through the presentation of truth; truth is conveyed in the Bible through direct statement, or through facts full of meaning; both demand interpretation. But when this is clearly recognized and admitted the question still remains: How can the teacher make his interpretative teaching most effective religiously?

The religious purpose essential

In the first place, let it be said that the religious purpose must pervade the whole process of study and teaching. The existence of such a

purpose deeply rooted in the heart of the teacher gives to his whole work an atmosphere difficult to define, but sure to influence the pupil, though perhaps as unconsciously as it is exerted. This intangible but very real quality which is imparted to one's teaching by the spirit and motive with which it is undertaken, this atmosphere which is created by the fact that the teacher's work is undertaken with prayer and carried forward with the supreme desire to render his pupils a real religious service, is the most important factor of the teacher's work, religiously speaking.

Application of truth to the conscience legitimate and necessary

But such a purpose, clearly and constantly maintained, does more than create an atmosphere. If combined with the recognition of the teacher's function as an interpreter, of which we have already spoken, it will in the highest degree conduce to a perception of how the facts and truths of the Scripture can be made to apply to the needs and consciences of the pupils. There is, no doubt, a prejudice on the part of many intelligent teachers against any direct spiritual application of the lesson to the class. The prejudice has its occasion and excuse in the too prevalent substitution of rough-and-ready application for real teaching. And it may, indeed, be doubted whether teaching without application is not better than application without teaching. But it by no means follows that teaching without applica-

tion is better than teaching with it. In truth, if the teacher really teaches the Scripture, brings out its meaning in a genuinely historical spirit, induces the pupil both to see the facts and teachings which it contains in their true light and to fix them in mind, he need have no fear of cheapening his work by pointing out faithfully the relation of the truths, thus set in a clear intellectual light, to the life and duty of the pupil. Strong, clear, religious teaching, serious appeal to the conscience based on fair exposition of the Scripture, is not repugnant to the pupils of our Sunday schools. They need it, and they will welcome it. It is not this, but feeble and oft-repeated exhortation based on nothing in particular, that repels them and drives them from the school as soon as they get beyond the years of childhood. The teacher who fairly and forcibly brings forth the meaning of the Scripture record, setting fact in relation to fact, and teaching in the light of its historic occasion—such a teacher does well. But he does better who to such intellectually strong teaching adds now and again, when the occasion permits and his heart impels him, the equally clear, forcible, and direct appeal to the consciences of his pupils. And he who strenuously excludes this latter element from his teaching robs that teaching of an element which would give it, not only added religious value, but increased attractiveness.

The nature of such application

Religious influence outside the class

But the best teachers are, as we have said, something more than instructors. They are also friends and pastors to their pupils. In this latter character they have the opportunity to exert a religious influence, we will not say superior to that which they can exert in the work of teaching, for it is doubtful whether this is possible, but at any rate complementary to that of the class hour. Suggestions of method in this matter must of necessity be of a general character. The problem is in every case a personal one. No one can lay down rules by the application of which one person can influence another religiously. The fundamental conditions for the exertion of such an influence are a genuine Christian character on the part of the teacher and a genuine interest in the religious walfare of the pupil. This interest must not be merely professional and perfunctory, but sincere and personal. Given this, the teacher will find his own ways, whether by private conversation, by class prayer-meetings, by invitations to the services of the church, or by acts of personal kindness, which, combined with the teachings of the class hour, will express, perhaps as effectively as any other means could, his genuine and deep desire for the religious welfare of his pupil.

But effective as may be such expressions of the teacher's own desire, he cannot be content

with this. Some response must be expected from the pupil. The teacher will endeavor by every legitimate means to induce those for whom he labors to express every newly aroused religious emotion and purpose in some definite act which will tend to make it of permanent moral effect. To arouse emotion which produces no effect on conduct is a serious pedagogical mistake. The test of the teacher's success in this matter is not his facility in exciting the pupils' feelings, but his ability so to arouse them that each such experience shall leave the pupil on a higher moral plane than it found him. Just how the teacher will do this must be left largely to his own good sense. First in importance is the necessity that the pupil be brought to a definite consecration of himself to the Christian life. This decision, which for brevity we have already repeatedly spoken of as "conversion," must of course always be a personal and individual experience. It is a matter of secondary importance whether the pupil himself is definitely aware of its nature, or recognizes at the moment its importance, or passes through it simultaneously with others. Yet in some form the idea that underlies the so-called "Decision Day" may be found practicable and helpful. Many young people will be greatly aided in making a confession of a new faith by finding that those of their own age are also taking

The response which must be expected

Conversion

the same step. Religious action is less difficult when social than when individual.

Religious decisions must not be forced

On the other hand, the recognition of the fact that in certain stages in their growth young persons are especially susceptible to religious impulses will lead the intelligent teacher to avoid anything like merely conventional or too often repeated religious exhortation, which, however well intended, is very apt to alienate boys and girls, if indeed not to deaden their religious sensibilities. The teacher needs to remember that real decision, that deep emotional and volitional change which constitutes the great epoch in the religious life of the pupil, can never be forced by pressure or excitement. In the pupils' case as in his own, it is often dangerous to seek immediate externally recognizable results. The divine Spirit works very gently and unnoticed in young hearts, and the strongest and sweetest natures often ripen very slowly. At the same time, boys and girls, as they approach adolescence, and again as they approach maturity, are especially susceptible to religious appeals. The wise teacher will not only be patient, but will be quick to seize upon the moment thus made strategic by nature itself.

But it would be a serious mistake to regard a teacher's religious duty to his pupils as fulfilled when he has been instrumental in their con-

version. After the pupil's decision to lead a Christian life has been learned, the teacher's effort will be in a true sense religiously educational. He will seek to lead the new life of the pupil into the larger and stronger state that may await it. Too often teachers overlook this responsibility, but it is always present. As the teacher grows, so should his Christian pupils grow. Just because he is their friend the teacher must educate them by sharing with them his own broadening faith. But here we pass from principles to personality. There is no rule to be quoted. The teacher must act the friend, and friendship needs no pedagogy.

The passage from an unthinking to an intelligent faith

Yet there is one particular phase of this part of the teacher's work that demands a special word. How shall the teacher most effectively help those pupils whose transition from a childhood's to a manhood's faith is attended with struggle and doubt? In the case of many persons life produces no change in faith, and a man dies as he has lived, accepting vital truths without either well-grounded dissent or assent. But in the case of many genuine students and teachers there come times when an unreasoning acceptance of God and truth is no longer possible, or, at least, is unsatisfactory, and an attempt is made, as far as possible, to base faith upon grounds which can command the assent of one's more mature thought.

Difficulties in the teacher's attempt

Moments of transition

Such moments are critical in a person's own religious life; but it may be doubted whether for an honest man they are half as critical as the attempt to lead another from an unthinking to a rational faith. Then there is involved not merely the question of one's own religious health, but also the entire question of the possibility of leading another mind through change into a new spiritual experience. There is the possibility that the teacher will not only unsettle, but destroy, another's faith. There is the danger that, in breaking down the old authority upon which faith was based, there will be also broken down the moral authority which controlled the other's life.

Why attempt to reground faith?

For these and other reasons a conscientious teacher who is growing in Christian knowledge and faith is tempted to ask, Is the effort worth the pains? If superstition gives birth to honesty, why attempt to abolish it? If unthinking faith and conventional acceptance of doctrine make a man's life pure and helpful, why not leave him enjoying things so effective? Why compel him to run the risks with which the educational problem confronts one?

Inaction is easier

These difficulties are not merely rhetorical. Probably no man who is deliberately attempting such an educational process escapes the feeling at times that his efforts are gratuitous and ill-advised, if not hurtful. It is far easier to

withdraw from such efforts than to devote himself to discovering their proper method. A Sunday-school teacher who finds his young class unable to follow the intellectual experience through which he himself has passed often is tempted to say that the experience may very well be kept in the background, and the boy or girl be allowed to follow along the line of such religious thought as circumstances may determine.

A teacher must share new truth with the pupil

Such considerations are of weight; but, after all, of not much weight. They simply emphasize the need that the teacher who wishes to help his pupil must be cautious — as wise as a serpent, if he wishes to be harmless as a dove. They do not inculcate the duty of silence or of a retreat from an educational effort; for why should not religious faith share in a person's intellectual growth? Why should a child whose future will lead him into the problems of law, or medicine, or modern business, be taught to be content with a faith about whose foundations he does not allow himself to think? Is it not rather the duty of a teacher to train his pupils to grow in the *capacity* for faith?

For a man who has new glimpses of religion to refuse to share them with immature minds is downright selfishness. In the same proportion as the one is able to bear should the other reveal. There is nothing more remarkable in the min-

The teaching of today is making the Christianity of tomorrow

istry of Jesus than his recognition of this principle. He was as far as possible from adopting a policy of ultra-caution in this respect. The future of Christianity among an intelligent people will depend upon the degree of success attending the efforts of those who are teaching boys and girls to accept the gospel as a revelation of God, and who, by sharing with their pupils their own broadening religious thought and experience, are aiding them to see the reasonableness and the beauty of a Christian truth.

But what if a teacher be mistaken?

But what if the teacher be mistaken and his message be not true? Undoubtedly here is a danger. If any man should be humble and prayerful, it is he to whom there has been given a new vision of divine truth. Novelties often masquerade as truth. But if a man has trained himself to elementary intellectual honesty; if he is less desirous of reputation than of verity; if he is himself profoundly convinced that what he believes to be true is true—there is nothing for him to do but to teach it.

A teacher must give his pupils the best there is in him; and if that best be new, then, in so far as he believes it helpful, must he share it, or be forever an unprofitable servant who has hidden his Lord's talent in a napkin.

A faith in the Bible as a storehouse and revelation of divine thought and in truth as an effect-

ive agency for the production of character, which will constrain the teacher to make it his first aim in teaching to bring forth clearly the meaning of the Scripture, and to make his whole work fundamentally interpretative; a genuine Christian character and a sincerely religious and prayerful life; an unaffected personal interest in the religious welfare of his pupils; a readiness to utilize moments and conditions especially favorable to conversion; a profound sense of his responsibility to share his maturing faith, rather than his questionings, with the immature minds intrusted to him; sanctified courage, and good sense in devising ways and means — these, we believe, are qualities which will assure not only intellectually, but religiously, effective Sunday-school teaching.

Summary: The prerequisites of religious effectiveness

CHAPTER IX.

THE PASTOR AS A TEACHER OF TEACHERS.

Popular interest in Bible study a new phenomenon

ONE cannot have good instruction without good instructors. Never was this truism so evidently true as today. The remarkable growth of interest in Bible study now everywhere evident demands the immediate improvement of the teaching force in all our churches. It is not many years since the members of churches allowed their pastors to serve as their vicars in such study, and were content with such crumbs of biblical lore as fell from sermons or Sunday-school helps. It is true that Christian people, then as always, may be supposed to have read the Bible, but, if results are any criterion, in the great majority of cases such reading was desultory and thoughtless. Speaking generally, the Bible was consulted, committed to memory, even worshipped; but it was not studied.

Contrast this situation with that in the churches today. The revolt against Sunday-school methods that were satisfactory ten years ago has practically become a revolution. Bible classes—some with very rudimentary methods, it must be admitted—number thousands of members. Bible-Study Leagues, Young Peo-

ple's Societies' courses, Reading Guilds, correspondence courses of innumberable sorts, popular lectures—these do not begin to exhaust the evidence at hand pointing to the widespread demand for Bible study among the rank and file of church members. The American Institute of Sacred Literature alone during a single year has ten thousand persons enrolled as students, some individually and some in classes. So ubiquitous is the interest that it may almost be said to be a characteristic of the day. To neglect it is to neglect a sign of the times. The rank and file of the churches may not be in advance of their leaders, but they are certainly making new demands for instruction. The present generation has suffered so greatly from ignorant and fanatical interpreters of the Scriptures that it sees clearly that, so far as the Bible is concerned, its only hope lies in a sane and rational knowledge of the biblical teachings.

It cannot be neglected

Those who have carefully observed the currents of church life during the past twenty-five years, and who have kept themselves in touch with theological tendencies, cannot be surprised at the present condition of affairs. In many quarters it has, indeed, been foreseen. For it cannot be traced to any one agency, or to any local causes, and it is peculiar to no country or denomination. Germany and England, France

Its cause

and America, though in differing degrees, have all shared in the movement; while both the great Roman church and all really virile Protestant denominations have felt the same need and in many ways have attempted to satisfy it.

Yet this very universality argues a common cause, and that, too, one not hard to find. Compare the age of pietistic, "commenting" devotion to the Bible with today, and the great difference at once appears: *the supremacy of the historical method.* So long as the Bible was studied for the purpose of establishing doctrines, so long its study could appeal but to the theologically minded. That it was so studied, and that such study was considered the only legitimate method, will appear to anyone who will recall the reception accorded pioneer popular works like those of Stanley in the Old Testament field or Seeley in that of the New. Men thought it as impious to speak of Jesus being historically conditioned as to speak of men as descendants of the lower animals. Religious teachers were bent on sustaining theologies, and the ordinary Christian judged Bible study by its theological fruits.

The result of historical study

And then into the midst of it all came the summons, alarming at first, but to every man who was in touch with the thought of his age full of inspiration: Study the Bible as one studies other literatures; interpret its teachings

Its inspiring message

in the light of the circumstances for which they were intended and out of which they sprang; use historical results to discriminate between the essential and the accidental; in all things hold yourself independent of all dogma and discover what the biblical writers actually taught, not what they ought to have taught. No student will ever forget the moment when for the first time he realized the full significance of such a summons. Brought face to face with a choice between such a method and the abandonment of some dogmatic position, he who chose to follow the new call suddenly found himself interested as never before in all that pertains to the Bible. It was not merely a new literature, it was a new revelation of God; and in the first flush of his enthusiasm he endeavored to lead others into similiar independence and similiar appreciation of biblical truth. Hebrew and Assyriology, Greek grammar and ancient history, were no longer of merely academic interest. The touch of history that had revivified the Bible revivified, even when it did not create, a world of allied interests.

The new Bible

The fruit of this new spirit, diffused by teachers and publications through a quarter of a century in America, we are just beginning to discover. Popular interest in the Bible is the outcome of popularizing historical methods. And

this fact in itself shows the need of better prepared teachers in the Sunday school. There are two suggestions springing from these facts. The first is this: The Christian minister, if he is wise, will recognize this interest and conform to it. It is only a matter of working wisely and along the line of least resistance. It is idle to plead that the minister already has so many imperative duties that he cannot add another. The situation is too critical for such casuistry. Here is a great popular movement in the churches; will ministers direct it, or will they abandon the strategic opportunity and conscientiously but blindly prefer a course of action that, as any sensible minister confesses, leads into a restless activity that distracts quite as much as it edifies?

Two suggestions: (1) The minister must recognize the new interest

The second suggestion is intended for those ministers who recognize the strategic situation and determine to exploit it. It is this: Do not make the mistake of believing that anything short of the true historical method will either satisfy yourself or meet the demands of your people. You do not need to be specialists in historical criticism, but you do need to teach the Bible as those who know about its composition, its history, its times. Merely to make pious or "spiritual" comments may for a time interest pious people, but the real teaching of the Bible is not to be gained merely by homiletical ingenu-

(2) Popular Bible study must be historical

ity, religious zeal, or even spiritual insight. The Bible from today forward will interest and inspire in the same proportion as it is studied and taught, not only sympathetically and prayerfully, but also historically. First discover precisely what the inspired writers meant to teach their own times, and then will one see clearly how to apply that teaching to one's own time.

But the opportunity for pastors is by no means exhausted by these general considerations. Upon them, we cannot but believe, rests ultimately the responsibility of seeing that the Bible is taught by properly instructed persons. Speaking generally, and always with due allowance for necessary exceptions, much religious indifference and doubt may be traced to the instruction in the Bible received in the Sunday school. The impressions made in childhood, be they never so general, are almost certain to affect, if not to regulate, the thinking of one's maturer years, and many a man has passed through a paralyzing struggle with doubt which might have been avoided had there been no misleading teaching as to the Bible given him while a child.

The need of instructed instructors

If there were no other reason, this fact makes it indispensable that the Sunday-school teacher should have training in Bible study. It is unpardonable for the Protestant churches to

leave the doctrinal and religious instruction of their future members to untrained men and women who must inevitably propagate misinterpretations of the Scripture and its teachings. To guarantee intelligent faith in the man demands that there be intelligent instructors of the child. It is the knowledge that such preparation is not demanded in the average Sunday school that causes many parents to fear to expose their children to the danger of being taught, as divinely inspired truths, crude opinions which must be unlearned in later years. For in unlearning such instruction they are only too liable to question Christianity itself. The remedy for such a danger to the church lies in the biblical education of its lay workers.

The sort of instruction needed

And this education must be something more than a cramming process. Sunday-school teachers must know something more than what to teach on the next Sunday. Such a process, so frequently the sole work of a teacher's meeting, may perhaps be better than nothing; for presumably the pastor or the superintendent is more intelligent in the use of the Scripture than those he instructs; but there is in it little or no disciplinary value, and too often but little to lead the teacher to adopt a correct attitude toward the Bible as a whole, or to biblical teaching as a whole. The proper training for

the Sunday-school teacher is that received by the pastor himself. Not that it should be in the original languages — although there are many Sunday-school teachers who might well study the Scripture in Greek or in Hebrew — but rather that the teacher should be taught to handle his Bible as theological students are taught in any reputable seminary how to handle theirs They should learn to adopt the historical point of view; to become interpreters rather than comment-makers; to let the Bible do its own teaching. They should be taught to use the best helps, even though they are not the product of their own denominational publishing house; to distinguish rigorously between a lesson suggested by a passage and the actual teaching of that passage. They should be taught that exhortation is valueless unless it presupposes instruction, and that their first duty as teachers in the Sunday-school is not to entertain their pupils, but to instruct them in the Word of God.

The pastor must teach teachers

The pastor cannot safely abandon this teaching of those who are to teach the members of the future church to enthusiastic young women or young men totally uninstructed except by others themselves uninstructed. Goodness, spirituality, prayerfulness, indispensable as each is, can never by themselves make suitable Sunday-school workers. It is the duty of the pastor to

train up teachers. If he does not do it, who will? And if he does not do it well, who will correct his errors? And if untaught or ill-taught teachers propagate their ignorance, the inefficiency and ignorance of his church, and the struggles of his parishioners with doubt, must be charged in large measure to the pastor himself, who, while pretending to stand for the truth of the Bible, has not trained his teachers to teach it.

The pastor must train up a generation of Bible students

But a pastor's duty is by no means limited to those who constitute the teaching force of the Sunday school. So long as any member of his church is likely to be drafted into the work of instruction, it will be his duty to be the biblical teacher of his entire church. He cannot for a moment forget that, as the ordinary church is organized, biblical instruction will be given the young by lay workers and not by himself. They, and not he, give men their first theological impressions. His duty, therefore, is clear. He must not only himself become a conscientious, unsectarian student of the Bible, but he must also train up a generation of men and women to be the same. He must see that the religious instruction given children is moral and soundly biblical. In this way alone can he hope to build up a strong and long-lived organization. Anecdotes, oratory, theological demagogism, may draw the crowds and swell the church rolls, but

not one of them will build a strong church. The country is strewn with wrecks of societies which have been for a moment swollen into abnormal size by some entertaining speaker; but one will look long for a church whose pastor has met the responsibility for the biblical instruction which is not, and will not remain, virile. The final word

In a single sentence: *The pastor must be the teacher of teachers.*

PART II

THE SCHOOL

CHAPTER I.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF A GRADED SCHOOL.

What is meant by grading

WHEN we pass from questions that pertain to the work of the teacher in relation to his class to those which pertain to the school at large, there is no topic of greater importance from the distinctly educational point of view than that of the grading of the school. By this we mean the grouping together of pupils for the purpose of instruction, and the adaptation to the classes thus formed of subject-matter to be taught and the method of teaching. Every school has some system of grading. No school puts four-year-old children and white-haired grandfathers into the same class. But this is almost the only general statement on this subject that can be made respecting the Sunday school as it is today. Scarcely anything in the whole work of the Sunday school is in greater chaos than this matter of grading. In many schools, probably in most, personal friendship between pupils, personal attachment existing, or supposed to exist, between pupils and teacher, have far greater influence in determining what pupils shall constitute a class than any other consideration. Incidentally this

is likely to bring together pupils of about the same age. In very few schools is there any distinct recognition of the relative grade of classes. In a rough way classes are graded by the assignment to them of a primary, intermediate, advanced, or senior quarterly. But beyond this no one can tell what is the grade, relative or fixed, of any class. In most schools there is, aside perhaps from the classes in the primary department, not only no attempt to adapt the material chosen from the Bible for study to the several grades of classes, but there is a fixed policy not to make any such adjustment, but on principle to have all the classes study the same Scripture passage on any given Sunday. In the matter of adaptation of method of teaching to the age and progress of the pupils the situation is perhaps not quite so chaotic. The editors of the lesson-helps seek, of course, to adapt the method of teaching suggested in a given quarterly to pupils of that age for which the particular quarterly is intended, and each teacher who has any skill in teaching aims to adapt the work to his own class. It is upon these two elements that we must always rely for adaptation in method. But even in this the situation is far from ideal. Not only are the lesson helps too often very unskilfully "graded," but there is a lamentable lack of pedagogical skill in the construction of any

Grading as it exists

Difference of method, not in lesson

grade. This defect is most serious in the higher grades. Teachers of advanced classes, influenced as all teachers are, save the few who have a real genius for teaching, by the text-book which is put into their hands, too often regard their duty as having been fulfilled when half an hour has been filled with asking questions printed upon a lesson sheet. Were these questions always such as are calculated to inspire interest in either teacher or pupils the case would be more hopeful, but too often they are perfunctory and inane. The high-school pupil loses his respect for the Bible and religion when the same person who teaches him with an evident mastery of his subject during the week undertakes a similar service on Sunday with the aid of cut-and-dried questions which answer themselves. The wider one's knowledge of the average Sunday-school instruction, the more convinced will one be that modern pedagogy has not been allowed to furnish much help in the conduct of Sunday-school classes composed of young men and women.

The case of advanced pupils

Too often the case of the adult classes is worse. Many schools believe grown men and women are no longer in need of instruction in the Bible, and therefore do not attempt to organize classes for their benefit. Often when such classes are formed their members, men and women who think independently and resultfully upon subjects

The case of adult classes

which they confess are of far less importance than the Bible, are content to answer questions which, excepting those involving some theology or philosophy, could be answered as well by their children or grandchildren.

The causes of the neglect of grading:

What is the cause of this state of affairs, which we cannot but regard as thoroughly unsatisfactory and unworthy of the Book we teach and the religion we inculcate? Two facts furnish the chief explanation: First, the Sunday school, as was almost of necessity the case, came into existence as an ungraded school. Our public schools originated in the same way. This historic fact is no reflection on the one or the other. The world was chaos before it became a cosmos. The difference is that, while our public schools long ago left behind this original chaotic state, the Sunday school has advanced in this respect only a little beyond the point from which it started. Yet what city school, what country school, now groups its pupils according to personal friendship, places a given class under the same teacher for a period of years, takes up each year new subjects to be studied by the whole school, without reference to any standard curriculum or principle of progress?

1. The origin of the Sunday school

2. The desire for international lessons

The second fact is the powerful influence of the principle of uniformity, *i. e.*, the use of the same lesson by the whole school and by all

schools throughout the world. The adoption of this principle has had a most powerful influence in stimulating the growth of Sunday schools, partly by its appeal to sentiment, partly by its facilitation of the publication of lesson helps. But it has at the same time operated most powerfully to perpetuate the existence of the ungraded Sunday school. Is this condition of things to continue? As we have said, no educational question pertaining to the Sunday school at large is of more vital importance today than this.

Two ideas of the Sunday-school curriculum

The issue is primarily between two distinct conceptions of what the course of study in a Sunday school should be. Shall uniformity be the dominant idea of the Sunday school curriculum, and shall all the school, and if possible all schools the world over, study the same lesson on the same day? Or shall the course of instruction be graded, as in all other schools today — graded, that is, not only in the treatment of the material, but also in the selection of the material to be treated?

A mediating possibility

It is, indeed, possible to consider an intermediate plan of graded classes, with uniform lessons graded only in respect to method of instruction. Such a compromise may be necessary as a transition step to a genuine graded curriculum, or may perhaps be found to combine all the advantages of uniformity and grading. But the

real choice must be between the two sharply distinguished ideals.

Advantages of uniformity

Now, the advantages of uniformity are undoubtedly great. It secures unity in the school, enabling the teachers to co-operate in the study of the lesson, and giving the superintendent an opportunity to direct and stimulate the work of instruction throughout the school. It secures unity in the home, making it possible for the father or the mother to assist and guide in the study of the lesson at home by the whole family from youngest to oldest, and facilitating the association of family prayer with the study of the Bible in the Sunday school. It immensely facilitates the preparation and publication of helps on the part of religious papers and in the form of quarterlies and lesson papers. It enlists on the side of Bible study in the Sunday school an immense capital of brains and money. It appeals powerfully to sentiment, and secures the help of that important ally. The superintendent and teacher in every city and hamlet in the land, the parent in every home, even the child himself, feels, or may feel, the stimulus and inspiration of the fact that the prayerful thought of the Christian world is turning with him to the portion of Scripture assigned for a certain Sunday's study.

But the graded curriculum has its advantages

too, and they are of the greatest importance from an educational point of view. The selection of material, not on the principle of engaging the whole Christian world in the study of a given portion at the same time, but on that of giving each class or grade of scholars in each school the material best adapted to their age and stage of advancement, and of so arranging the course both in respect to material and method of study as to constitute an orderly and progressive course of study, is the only method which can make our Sunday schools in the best sense of the term educational institutions. This method adapts the material to the capacity of the scholar, avoiding the absurdity of setting children six years old to studying the pastoral epistles or the book of Revelation. It secures the study of the different portions of the Bible in the best order, taking into account both the relation of the different parts of the Bible to one another and the varying needs, capacities, and critical periods in the development of pupils of different ages. It will result in giving to each pupil who completes the course a connected and related knowledge of the whole Bible and of its teaching taken as a whole, instead of the distorted and disconnected view which the system of uniformity too often gives.

Advantages of a graded curriculum

Which system shall we choose; or rather, toward which shall we work? For we scarcely

possess the literature today that makes a choice possible at once. The answer will depend in the end upon which of two conceptions we hold of the Bible and of the purpose of the Sunday school. On the one side, if the Bible is alike in all its parts, and equally valuable in them all, being useful simply for the moral and religious precepts or theological propositions which can be directly culled from it, or gained by a species of allegorical interpretation, then the advantages of the system of uniformity will probably outweigh in our minds those of a graded educational curriculum. For if the loaf is of uniform quality through, and equally adapted to child and grandparent, why trouble ourselves to select here a piece for one class and here another for another? But if the Bible is the history of a progressive revelation, and if, for this reason, it yields its best results alike intellectually and religiously when it is studied with due reference to the relation of part to part, and to the unfolding of the great divine plan and revelation that runs through it, then we shall give our suffrages to the graded curriculum in preference to the system of uniformity.

Choice as affected by our conception of the Bible as an historical record and product

In saying this it is by no means implied that the whole curriculum should be dominated by the aim to teach history in the chronological order. The best starting-point for the study of history is not necessarily its earliest event. Nor does an

education necessarily begin with the study of history. But a graded curriculum will make provision both for whatever study of the Bible ought, for the younger children, to precede a treatment of it from a historical point of view, and for due recognition in the later stages of the curriculum of the historical character of the book and the progressive character of the revelation made in it.

As affected by our conception of the Sunday school

If, again, we conceive of Sunday-school teaching as essentially preaching, that is, primarily intended for the purpose of persuading to action, rather than of instructing and so leading indirectly to action and the development of character, especially if we carry this so far as to hold that the more the element of exhortation predominates over that of the acquisition of knowledge the more truly the Sunday school realizes its ideal, then we shall see little advantage in a graded curriculum, and the real advantages of uniformity will lead us to decide for the system of which that is the dominating thought. But if, on the other hand, we believe that the Sunday school is an educational institution, in which the moral and spiritual end is supreme, but the agency employed is distinctly educational; if we hold that the church ought to have one service in which the great moral and religious end of the church itself shall be sought distinctly through biblical instruction, and that the Sunday school

shall be that service — then we shall decide that in it the best educational methods ought to be employed, and that the Sunday school ought to have a curriculum, not merely lessons used at the same time by all the pupils from the child to the adult.

On which side the decision will be

Which side of this question the church will ultimately take we have no doubt whatever. The uniform system has accomplished great results for the Sunday school. But for this very reason in an increasing number of schools it will be the stepping-stone to something still better. It is not true that the Bible is of homogeneous character throughout, so that all parts of it are equally adapted to the instruction of children of every age, and that it is of no consequence at which end the child begins to learn it. Let it be granted that almost any portion of Scripture may be made to suggest something that will be useful to a pupil of any age; yet the attempt to use certain portions of Scripture for the instruction of the younger children, for example, inevitably results either in the maltreatment of the Scripture or the confusion of the child, and usually in both; while the limitation of the selection to those portions which can be used by the whole school, including the youngest pupils, means such a curtailing of the course of study as inevitably drives the older scholars out of the school.

Especially harmful is such a method because

it renders it impossible to give to the pupil any connected and true conception of the organic unity and progressive unfolding of divine revelation. A chaotic curriculum issues in chaotic conceptions of the Bible. What would be said of the argument that, because it is possible to teach something about geometry to any pupil from five years to twenty years of age, therefore geometry ought to be made in a given year or term the subject of study from the top to the bottom of our public-school system? And yet almost every argument that can be urged for uniform lessons in the Sunday school might be urged for such a course in the public schools.

The influence of the curriculum on the pupil's conception of the Bible

The truth is that the Sunday school is lagging far behind the public school in educational method, and stands today too nearly on the level of the old ungraded district school. If the study of the Bible is of less importance than the study of mathematics, if religious culture is less necessary than secular, then the Sunday school may perhaps afford to be at the rear end of the educational procession, employing antiquated and ineffective methods for sentimental reasons. But if the Bible is the book the Christian church believes it to be, if religion is a determinative and fundamental thing in life, then the Sunday school ought to appropriate and employ the best known educational methods. Not to do so is a crime against re-

ligion, an insult to the Book. Is it not worth while to teach the Bible as well as we teach arithmetic and geography, to give as good instruction in the things of the soul and the life to come as in those of the counting-house and commerce? Uniformity has its advantages, but they may be purchased at too high a price.

Possible lessons for various grades of school children

If these contentions are just, some practical conclusions follow. In the first place, the intermediate plan of uniform lessons and graded classes and methods is only a compromise, by no means the final or ideal system. The most important advantages of a graded system are secured only by a graded course of study. It is not enough simply to have questions of increasing difficulty upon the same lesson assigned to different classes. There are some subjects which the public schools would not teach pupils of different grades. No more should the Sunday school, if it would hope to gain the best results, undertake to teach in different ways the same lesson to infants and adults. The passage that to the man or woman might be of greatest interest, to the child might be unintelligible, and to a less degree the converse is true. The child lives in the world of sense. Let him have the incomparable stories in which the Hebrew writers set forth truth. He will see the lesson which the story enforces without any great need of

mechanical devices. The pupils of the high school live in the stimulating air of history and mathematics, of literature and elementary science — in a world of new facts and new instruction. For them there is the history of the Jews and of the church, the study of scriptural biography in the light of modern research. It is a study, if only it be taught rationally by even a moderately informed teacher, quite as interesting as that of Greece and Rome, and alive with the most practical and vital teaching for the conduct of life. Once let such subjects be taught by methods followed in the best public schools to which the members of the Sunday-school class belong, and an end will come to indifference and contempt.

The case of pupils of the high-school age

The adult classes present few new difficulties when once the general principle be recognized of adapting the subject-matter and the method of teaching to the pupil. Men and women are interested in matters that are at once practical and abstract. They are not greatly interested in stories or facts as such; they wish to see always the relation of doctrine to life and of God to man. Such lessons should be chosen as meet this demand. While a child may be allowed to picture scattered events, or study scattered passages, the member of an adult class soon gets a distaste by such study and leaves the school.

The adult grade

Were the lessons more adapted to their wants—studies of entire books, of the modern bearing of scriptural teachings, of special doctrines, of the teachings of different books upon the same subject, of history and biography—we should find men and women everywhere interested in their Bibles, and the adult classes constituting a proper proportion of the school. It is not extemporaneous exhortation, or vague moralizing, or the asking of printed questions that such classes want, but intellectual life as virile and as honest as that in which their members live during the week.

The first and easiest forward step

But, in the second place, as a useful temporary expedient and a first step toward a graded course of study, there may wisely be adopted a system of graded classes in each department of the school. Thus, assuming that the school is divided into Elementary, Secondary, and Adult Divisions, there may be selected for each division a course of lessons based on Scripture material adapted to the age of the pupils in that division, considered as a whole. Then in each division the pupils may be grouped in graded classes, all studying the same lesson, each class bearing a grade number and composed of pupils who can be profitably taught together. In this case the principle of uniformity holds within each division, as all the pupils are studying the same

lesson. At the same time they are so grouped that all those of about the same age and acquirements are taught together. Thus the method of teaching may be adapted to each group, and pupils may pass from one class to another, by a change either of teachers or of teaching methods or of both. In the case of young people a provisional basis of grading is at hand in that of the public schools. To a certain extent all grading is necessarily arbitrary, but if classes were so arranged that there would be no mixing of pupils of widely different grades in the public schools, they would acquire a unity that would more than compensate for the breaking of family groups or the separation of acquaintances. At the same time the teacher would better understand the limits and the possibilities of the pupil, as well as be aided in finding the common intellectual ground so indispensable for successful teaching.

Administration of a graded Sunday school

The administration of a school graded either on the true basis, the biblical knowledge of the pupil, or provisionally by their grade in the public school, would be ideal only when each department could meet by itself and conduct its instruction along the lines it has discovered most effective. The adult class may occasionally like to share in general exercises that reduce the teaching period to a few minutes, but, as a rule, they

require more time for discussion than younger classes, and care very little for singing and declamations and marches. To reduce their time causes as much difficulty as the lengthening of the teaching period brings to a teacher struggling with a class of uneasy boys. But where it is impossible for each department to meet separately in its own room or rooms, it will still be possible for the essential principle to be observed; the young children, the school children, and the adult classes each having their own lesson topic.

The question of teachers and promotions

Whether or not pupils should pass up from one teacher to another, or whether teachers should change their methods as their classes grow older, is a question that will probably require answer according to particular cases. In some instances it is evident that it would be better for the same teacher to keep a class, but, in general, there is much in favor of pupils passing from one teacher to another as they are promoted from one grade to another; for not only does this give the pupil a special sense of advance, but it enables teachers to become competent in handling pupils of each grade. And it is only in effective teaching that the efficiency of any school lies.

A second step

A second step, which still falls short of the ideal, may also be taken, by some schools at least. In one or two cases publishing houses have already issued, or arranged from their pre-

vious publications, the text-books for a complete curriculum. This is a hopeful sign for the future and a help for the immediate present. If any school should not find these series altogether satisfactory it is still possible for a discreet committee to select from the publications of various publishers the material for such a graded curriculum as it may judge adapted to the needs of the school. This plan has already proved successful in a number of our best schools.

The duty of the hour for biblical scholars: prepare a curriculum for the Sunday school

But it must be admitted that the ideal literature is yet to be produced. There is not yet even agreement as to the precise character of the course of study itself. We cannot spring at once into a perfectly organized curriculum. If the Sunday school ought to seek the high end which belongs to it in common with every other agency of the church, the creation and development of Christian character, by distinctly educational means, and those the best, then to someone there belongs the duty of framing an intelligently constructed curriculum for the study of the Bible in the Sunday school, and to someone that of preparing suitable literature for the study and teaching of it in accordance with such a curriculum. If no one is wise enough to do this to-day, if we do not even know what the curriculum ought to be, then we must begin still farther back and take up the study of the problem and the collec-

And also of publishers

tion of the data which will enable us to construct at least a provisional curriculum. Of that great capital of money and brains and spiritual zeal which is now going into the preparation of a literature which, however able and scholarly and devout, is based on an antiquated educational method, is there not some part that can be devoted to the elevation of Sunday-school instruction, to bringing it up at least to the level of our none too perfect public-school system?

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GRADED CURRICULUM.

The construction of a graded curriculum must at present be tentative

To say that the Sunday school ought to have a graded curriculum is one thing; to show what that curriculum should be is another and a more difficult task. One is compelled to work here almost without precedent or experience, and must fall back on general principles and analogies derived from the secular education, where a curriculum has already been worked out, aided by what little experience has already been had. Any attempts at the shaping of a course of study for the Sunday school must be regarded as tentative, and will undoubtedly be revised by experience. Nevertheless it seems necessary to make the attempt.

What shall be the principles on which it is based?

What should such a course of study aim to accomplish? And what are the principles on which it should be constructed?

Again we must recur to the fundamental proposition that, while the ultimate aim of the Sunday school is religious — the creation and development of Christian character in the pupils — its proximate aim is educational, being chiefly

the impartation to the pupil of true and thorough knowledge of the Bible. If this is the right conception of the purpose of the Sunday school, then it follows that the curriculum should be so constructed that the instruction given to pupils of each grade should not only be adapted both to the intellectual advancement and to the religious needs of the pupils of that grade, but that it should contribute in the highest degree both to the steady acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the Bible and to the creation and development of Christian character.

The principle stated

This means that the Sunday school should have a curriculum of biblical study as thoroughly graded and constructed on as precise pedagogical principles and as thorough psychological knowledge as the best curriculum which has been devised or can be devised for the secular schools.

The Bible and the curriculum

But while thus characterizing the curriculum of the Sunday school as biblical, we cannot insist that it shall confine itself absolutely to the Bible. Throughout the course knowledge derived from the Bible, in order that it may serve the religious purpose of the school, must be set in relation to life. On the other hand, contributory instruction may legitimately be drawn from sources outside the Bible; from the pupil's own experience and observation; from those of the teacher; and from

the still larger experience recorded in history and reflected in literature. In the Sunday school, all of these occupy a place second in importance to that of the Bible, but in them all divine truth is disclosed and may be brought to light. All of them, therefore, have their value and use, especially as enabling the pupil to feel the corroborative effect of concurrent testimony as regards religious and moral truth.

How far shall the curriculum recognize "application?"

The extent to which these contributory sources of instruction should be employed and the explicitness with which the application of truth to life and duty should be pointed out will vary greatly in different parts of the course. In general, the younger the pupil, the more necessary is it to bring truth into clear and explicit relation to his life; the older he is, the more safely and wisely may he be left to effect this connection for himself. In the kindergarten it is especially necessary to set the truth, whether drawn from the Bible or from the revelation in nature, in relation with the actual life of the child. Yet here also the biblical element ought always to be present. The kindergarten teachers of a Sunday school should bear in mind that they are something more than entertainers; something more than inculcators of truth in general. However much they may employ things and events familiar to the child as

suggesting the truth or its application, the truths which they have to impress are those which are set forth in the Bible. As far as kindergarten methods permit, the child should be brought face to face with these truths.

The curriculum to be selective

But shall the curriculum of a school cover the whole Bible and the whole field of biblical study? Perhaps this would be the ideal. But no one who has even an approximately adequate notion of the breadth and depth of the biblical books, and of the immensity of the task of interpreting them, first as units and then as successive and connected outcroppings of a century-long process of divine revelation, can for a moment dream that the Sunday-school curriculum, with its one short exercise a week, can cover this great field. The curriculum must proceed on a principle of selection.

The elective system in colleges

And right here the development of the college curriculum may furnish us a helpful suggestion. As the field of modern knowledge has grown and new subjects have knocked for admission at the door of the college curriculum, the colleges, as a rule, have not found it expedient either wholly to exclude them or to make room for them by excluding the older occupants. Room has been found for them by introducing the principle of election. The advantages of this method need be no more than hinted at here, some of them

The elective system in the Sunday school

more marked in the case of the Sunday-school than of the college. In the first place, the introduction of a wide range of subjects is an advantage even to those who are compelled to limit themselves to the same amount of work which they would otherwise have done. The necessity of choosing between different courses, or the knowledge that others are pursuing a different course from that which he is himself pursuing, broadens the pupil's horizon and in a valuable, though superficial, way increases his knowledge of the field of Bible study. Under an elective system, again, it is possible to adapt instruction more perfectly to individual needs. And, finally, it permits the student who will remain in the school year after year to be always moving forward to new subjects and fields of study, and by this very fact tends to hold him in the school when otherwise he would drift away, feeling that he had gained all that the school had to give him.

Prescribed courses

But great as are the advantages of an elective system, the Sunday-school curriculum cannot, of course, be elective throughout. Aside from the fact that the majority of the pupils who have not reached adult age are quite unprepared to make a wise selection of courses, it is evident that there are some fundamental things which all need to learn and which must be learned as the basis of more advanced elective study.

The testimony of the uniform system at this point

At this point one may well utilize the experience gained under a system of uniform lessons. For a generation Christendom has been instructing its children and youth in what earnest men have designated as material that should be known by all Christians. The system, pedagogically considered, is exposed to many objections. But, in that it has demanded that all should know something, and in so far as it has required that this something should include the essential elements of the biblical material, it points the way for further progress. Whatever failures may have followed the attempt to make this system of uniform lessons permanent rather than introductory to something better, its efficiency and effects at this point enforce the desirability of seeing that sooner or later all pupils study the same lessons.

General conclusion: The course to be partly prescribed and partly elective

From such considerations as these it results, then, that the first part of the course must be prescribed, the latter part elective. Where the line should be drawn may be matter of doubt, but perhaps no better arrangement can be made than this: for the year corresponding to the elementary and secondary divisions of the secular education—that is, approximately from the sixth to the eighteenth year of the pupil's life—let the course be prescribed; for the subsequent years let it be elective.

What, now, shall be the governing principle of the prescribed course? Four factors must be taken into account: the formative and developing character of the years during which the pupil is pursuing this course; the fundamental principles of biblical study as determined by the nature of the Bible; the fact that the prescribed courses are all that will be pursued in common by all the pupils, and that they must therefore serve as the basis of the future diversified work; the certainty of spiritual crises in the life of the pupil during the years he is pursuing the prescribed courses.

Principles governing the prescribed course

As respects the first point, it must be remembered that the majority of the pupils who pursue the prescribed course will be in the same year advancing through the elementary and secondary schools in their secular education. In the latter part of this period they will be pupils in the high school, and their course will include the study of history, in all cases the history of the United States, in a large proportion of cases that of some other country also, as of England or of Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

The progress in the secular education of the pupils

As respects the second point, we have endeavored to show in previous chapters of this book that the deepest insight into and broadest outlook upon the meaning of the Bible, the truest conception of the basis of its authority, is

The character of the Bible

The necessity of progress in the curriculum

to be gained by a thoroughly historical study of it. It is through the biblical history in the broadest sense of the term that the divine revelation is most clearly revealed and most clearly seen to be divine.

But if this be so, then, in view of the third consideration named above, the prescribed course should culminate, intellectually speaking, in a broad historical view of the Bible.

Yet it is equally manifest that it cannot begin where it ends. Facts in isolation must precede facts in relation. And the work of the elementary division must be in no small measure the acquisition by the pupil of those facts which in the latter portion of his prescribed course are to form the basis of a true historical study. Still more needful is it to remember that in these earlier years the child is susceptible to religious impressions and that the instruction should be such as to lodge in his mind, or rather impress on his heart, the elemental principles of religion and conduct. We come, therefore, to the conclusion that the prescribed course, covering the ten to fourteen years of the elementary and secondary divisions — approximately the years from five to eighteen in the pupil's life — should begin with the simpler stories of the Bible and the more elementary truths of biblical teaching: it should move toward and aim at the acquisition of a sys-

tematic knowledge of biblical history, including in this term the history and interpretation both of events and teachings.

Spiritual crises demand appropriate lessons

The fourth fact, that of the recurrence of spiritual crises, demands that the subjects of study should be adjusted to the stages of religious growth. It is here that one especially realizes that the boy and girl, quite as much as the mere child, is to be considered. Further, it must never be forgotten that moral and religous growth is possible only as a result of successive decisions; and in the great majority of cases such decisions are accompanied with no small introspection, and often with actual moral struggle. The psychology of religion enables us to treat this matter with such precision that conversion has come to have a distinct pedagogical significance. Speaking generally, these crises come in the periods of early adolescence and of early maturity. While certain individual experiences will always prove exceptions to this statement, the curriculum here, as always, must conform to what statistics show to be general tendencies. The lessons intended for the years in which such crises may be expected should be especially adapted to move pupils to the right spiritual decisions. In the case of boys and girls,[2] the hindrances to the correct decision spring less from doubt than from indifference to ideals.

Nothing will overcome such indifference like the appeal made by life. Let the lessons, therefore, be chiefly biographical. In the second period of crises, that of the maturing life of the youth, the difficulties are pretty generally due to actual moral deadness or to intellectual doubts. Clearly for such a period biographical lessons should be supplemented by those setting forth biblical teaching. Between these two periods of crises the lessons may most fitly give the pupils materials that shall develop a life openly Christian or inculcate such truths as will make more certain the decision for Christian profession in the second period of crises.

General scheme:

These considerations suggest the following general scheme for a graded curriculum:

1. Kindergarten

1. In the kindergarten the instruction must of course be *viva voce*. The aim of the teacher must be to lodge in the hearts of the little children some of the elemental principles of morality and religion. Obviously this cannot be done abstractly. Stories from the Bible and the children's own experiences will serve as media by which to convey or suggest the truth, and the child should at once be given opportunity to express in play or picture work his idea of the truth which has been presented to him.

2. The next three years

2. In the first three years after the kindergarten the aim should be to lodge in the memory

2. Stories for children

of the child such stories from the Bible as will interest and profit him, and certain of the choicer sentences or verses of the Bible, such as will make upon his mind now an impression of spiritual truth, and will be treasured in the memory in after life. Pictures and other illustrative apparatus must be freely used, and all the teaching must be skilfully brought into connection with the child's own life. To this end stories from other literature than the Bible and from life may be freely used by the teacher. The religious and ethical aim must be constantly kept in mind along with the purpose of storing the pupil's memory.

The plan upon which these stories should be arranged deserves more careful study than it has yet received. An obvious division would be to devote one year to stories from the life of Jesus, a second to stories from the Old Testament, and a third to stories from the lives of the apostles. But it is probable that a topical arrangement on the basis of the ethical and religious ideas to be inculcated would be better, and that more account should be taken of the seasons of the year and the festivals of the church, such as Christmas and Easter, than a purely biographical grouping would permit. Neither the chronological nor the biographical motive appeals very strongly to pupils at this age. Nor, indeed, is it

necessary to compel them to arrange details in any schematic order.

3. The study of the Bible as a library

3. The child who has in the preceding three years heard many of the stories from the lips of the teacher, and has, it is to be hoped, had many of them read to him at home, has presumably by this time learned to read for himself. It is time, therefore, that he should begin to learn something about the books of the Bible, as a preparation to the study of them from the printed page. A year may very profitably be given to the study of the Bible as a collection of books — a library. The children should learn from specimens of each kind the different kinds of books which the Bible contains, as, for example, books of history and stories, of law, of sermons, of poetry and wisdom, of letters, and of vision. Home readings from books of each class may be assigned, the co-operation of the parents being secured. Passages of Scripture notable for their beauty or content, such as the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, choice psalms, sayings of Jesus and the apostles, should be committed to memory. The names of the books of the Bible may be learned by classes and in the order in which they are printed in the Bible, with the intent that the children may be able to turn readily to any one of them. The primary and controling aim should be to give the pupil a knowledge of the varied

contents of the biblical library, and of their arrangement in the Bible, and above all to give him a genuine interest in them which will impel him to further study of them and prepare him for it.

4. Biographical study

4. The pupil who in the kindergarten and the first three years after leaving it has had lodged in his memory many of the stories of the Bible, yet disconnectedly, without reference to their historical order, and who has spent a year in gaining a general knowledge of the contents of the whole biblical library, including, perhaps with some special emphasis, the books of history and story, may now profitably pass on to biographical study. In such study the unit is no longer the story, detached and isolated, but the life of the individual, the patriarch, prophet, king, apostle, or Christ. The pupil being now able to read, the books of the Bible should themselves be his chief text-book, whatever aids to the use of them it may be expedient to put into his hands. This portion of the curriculum may perhaps also occupy three years, and should be so taught as to result in the dedication of the young life to God.

5. The study of biblical books

5. At this point in the curriculum the pupil, having had three years of stories, a year in a general survey of the books of the Bible, and three years of biographical study, may properly

take up the continuous and more thorough study of single biblical books. Three years may be given to this kind of study. The aim should be to give the pupil an intelligent idea of the content and, as far as he is prepared for it, of the structure and character of certain biblical books. These books are the sources of the history which he is to take up in the succeeding four years. It being impossible to study thoroughly the whole of the literature, typical examples should be selected for study. But that the pupil may nevertheless gain a genuine, even though general, knowledge of the content of the whole Bible, there should be laid out for him a three-years' course of reading, covering all the books of the Bible not taken up for thorough study.

6. Biblical history

6. In the last four years of the prescribed course the aim should be to give the student a connected idea of biblical history, including both events and teaching, and these in their mutual relations; in short, a comprehensive survey of the history of biblical revelation, from the first recorded beginnings in the most ancient times down to the end of the apostolic age.

This course of fourteen years might be accomplished by the brightest pupils in somewhat less time. Each class pursuing its work independently might go rapidly or slowly, according to ability; and individual pupils might carry on two courses

at once, thus shortening the course to twelve, or even ten, years.

7. Elective courses in the adult division

7. When the pupil has completed his prescribed course, covering the twelve years or so of the elementary and secondary divisions, he will pass into the adult division, where elective courses, sufficient to occupy him the rest of his life, may easily be offered, if only competent teachers can be provided. All the books of the Bible may be taken up for literary and interpretative study; the several periods of biblical history may be studied in greater detail than before; the whole field of biblical theology and biblical ethics is open; and there seems to be no valid reason why courses in applied ethics, personal and sociological, as well as courses in the history of the church, ancient and modern, especially the history of missions, should not be offered here also.

These seven propositions yield something like the following

CURRICULUM.

I. ELEMENTARY DIVISION.

Curriculum

1. THE KINDERGARTEN.
2. Three years of stories, pictures, and verses, the chief basis of grouping being probably that of the ethical and religious ideas to be inculcated.
3. One year of general study of the books of the Bible: Elementary biblical introduction, accompanied by read-

ing of appointed portions and the memorizing of selected passages.[1]

4. Three years of biographical study.
   Fifth year: The life of Jesus.
   Sixth year: Lives of Old Testament heroes.
   Seventh year: The lives of the apostles.

II. SECONDARY DIVISION.

1. Three years in the study of the books of the Bible:
   Eighth year: First half — 1 Samuel.
   Second half — The gospel of Mark.
   Ninth year: First half — Isaiah, chaps. 1–12.
   Second half — Acts, chaps. 1–12.
   Tenth year: First half — The Psalms.
   Second half — 1 Peter; Acts, chaps. 13–28.
2. Four years of biblical history:
   Eleventh year: Old Testament history begun.
   Twelfth year: Old Testament history completed.
   Thirteenth year: The life and teachings of Jesus.
   Fourteenth year: The history and teachings of the apostolic age.

III. ADULT DIVISION.

Elective courses:

1. The interpretation and literary study of the several books of the Bible.
2. Biblical ethics and theology.
3. Biblical history, more detailed than before.
4. Church history.
5. Christian doctrine.

[1] For a paper showing the examination successfully passed by a class of boys and girls about ten years of age, who had spent a year on the course, see Appendix.

CHAPTER III.

EXAMINATIONS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Advantages of examinations in the Sunday school

OUGHT there to be examinations in the Sunday school? Some will certainly answer with a prompt negative. But if not, why not? Do not the same reasons which lead to the use of examinations in other schools suggest the employment of them in the Sunday school? An examination can be said to serve three useful ends: First, if rightly conducted, an examination tends to unify and organize the pupil's knowledge. It helps to bring into one connected whole what was before more or less fragmentary and disconnected in his mind. Second, it serves as a stimulus to the pupil to do thorough work. Almost without his recognizing it, the fact that he is to pass an examination upon his work at the end of the quarter or course leads the pupil to make a greater effort to learn thoroughly the successive lessons. Third, it helps the teacher or examiner to decide what work the student should next take up; in other words, it is a criterion for promotion. Now, all these results are as desirable in the Sunday school as in any other school, if only it be recognized that it is the business of the Sunday school really to

teach and of the pupil really to learn. Indeed, the examination is more needed in the Sunday school than in the public school. Just because the public school can use certain methods which are impracticable in the Sunday school for securing faithful work day by day, it could conceivably more easily than the Sunday school dispense with examinations. Once let it be clearly recognized that the Sunday school exists to give real instruction in the Bible, and to secure real study and learning on the part of the pupil, and it will be seen that, so far from there being less reason for examinations in Sunday schools than in other schools, there is, in fact, more reason for them.

Objections considered

But it will be objected that the examination is precisely that feature of the public schools which is most repugnant to the pupil, and that the introduction of the system into the Sunday school will at once create a dislike for the Sunday school which will drive pupils away from it. Undoubtedly, a system of examinations might be introduced into a Sunday school in such a way as to antagonize and repel some pupils, and even to lead some to leave the school. But we venture the assertion—and we speak from experience—that, with a reasonable degree of discretion and skill, very few pupils, if any, need be lost, and many will be gained. The best pupils will re-

joice in the change, because of the consequent improvement in the character of the work; many pupils will be held in the school, as they were before, by parental authority or other influence unaffected by the system of instruction; and wisdom in the manner of introducing the examinations will prevent the driving away of even those who would not be held by these other influences.

Methods of examination

How, then, shall examinations be introduced, and of what character shall they be? In the larger schools it will be found desirable to appoint an Examiner, to have special charge of the whole matter. He will need to study the situation, and to use wisdom and discretion both in introducing examinations and in conducting them. It will be necessary for him always to keep in close touch with the teachers, both that he may adapt the examinations to the instruction given and that he may know with what difficulties the system has to contend. In the smaller schools the superintendent or secretary may also serve as examiner. At first, at least, the examinations may be made optional, no pupil being obliged to take them, but all being encouraged to do so, and honorable mention being made of those who take the examination and pass it successfully. This honorable mention may be made in the form of an announcement in the report of the secretary or examiner, read before the school, or by post-

The Examiner

ing a bulletin where all can see it. The examination should not cover a long period, probably not to exceed three months, though when the system is fairly under way an annual examination might be given for those who are willing to take it. If the lessons call for written work each week, the work thus done week by week should be taken into account in the examination. The quarterly examination should not be a mere test of memory. Its educational purpose should be distinctly kept in mind. If the questions are rightly framed, so as to constitute a real review of the main features of the quarter's work, they may very properly be put into the hands of the pupils on one Sunday, to be returned with the answers a week later, the pupils being instructed to make use of the Bible and any other accessible sources of information, personal help only being excluded.

Results to be expected

Such an examination, announced with reasonable skill and a clear statement of the real reasons which justify it, and conducted with wisdom and fairness, will not only prove no obstacle to the attendance of the scholars, but can scarcely fail to stimulate both teachers and pupils to do better work, and thus to increase the efficiency of the school in its work of instruction.

Have you an examination in your school? If not, why not? If the grade of your work is so

low as to make examinations impracticable, does not that work need elevating? If so, will not an examination help to elevate it? Will you appoint the best man or woman you have to act as examiner, and announce an optional examination on the next quarter's work?

A question for the reader

CHAPTER IV.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GRADED SCHOOL.

Organization necessitated by growth

MARK HOPKINS at one end of the log, some youthful Garfield at the other—this would constitute in embryo a college. So one teacher filled with knowledge, zeal, and skill, and one pupil, would constitute a Sunday school. Yet if the fame of Mark Hopkins should draw to the log other youthful Garfields, a score, a hundred, a thousand, it would be found necessary to do what our American colleges and universities have done—appoint a president and other administrative officers, deans, and secretaries and treasurers, and work out little by little a plan of organization which would enable the teacher and the pupil, for whose teaching and learning all else exists, to do their work most effectively and successfully. So in the Sunday school, as the one teacher becomes twenty and the one pupil a hundred or five hundred or a thousand, differentiation of service becomes necessary, and consequently a more or less complex organization of the school. What shall be the form of that organization?

In answering this question, two principles, mutually corrective, need to be kept in mind: First, the principle of simplicity: no divisions of pupils, no office or officer, except to meet a real and legitimate need of the school; no machinery, except to further the central educational and religious purpose of the school. And, second, the principle of completeness: every legitimate function of the school provided for, with some one person charged with special responsibility for it. These principles presuppose a definite conception of the purpose for which the school exists; and if they are followed, the organization of the school will simply reflect that purpose and further its realization. The complexity of organization will vary with the size of the school and the completeness with which it is doing the work of a school; with the size, because in the small school—to take an extreme case, in the school of one teacher and one class—various functions will be combined in one person or even lapse altogether because of the absence of any need to co-ordinate the work of the different parts of the school; with the completeness of its work, because only functions actually performed or to be undertaken legitimately call for offices and officers.

Simplicity

Completeness

But that we may take a broad and reasonably complete view of the matter, let us assume a

Organization as required by diverse age of pupils

large school and one that is undertaking all its proper forms of service. There are two points of view from which to look at such a school: first, from that of the diversity of the pupils in age and maturity of mind; second, from that of the varied forms of service which the school aims to render its pupils. Consider it first from the point of view of age of pupils. In a school which includes pupils of all ages, from the little children in the kindergarten to men and women of mature age, it is self-evident that there must be division of the school by, so to speak, horizontal planes. The teaching and exercises of worship which appeal to the youngest children are not suitable for adults, and the converse is even more emphatically true. Into how many divisions a school should be divided is a question to which no absolute answer can be returned, but probably wherever possible there should be

The Divisions

at least three: The Elementary Division, including pupils to about the fourth or sixth grade; the Secondary Division, including pupils from the fifth or seventh to the twelfth grade; and the Adult Division, including all above the twelfth grade. To these three it might be expedient in some cases to add two others by separating the Kindergarten from the Elementary Division and organizing a Home Division separate from the Adult Division.

Principals of divisions

Now, the character of the work in each of these several divisions is so differentiated from that of the others that it is expedient to place at the head of each division a Principal, who shall have general oversight of and responsibility for the conduct of the work in that division, selecting and appointing teachers, filling vacancies, and conducting the public exercises of the division.

Organization as required by diversity of function

On the other hand, the diversity of the kinds of service which the school seeks to render to all its pupils, and the necessity that all the work of the school in each of these lines shall proceed upon some intelligent and consistent plan, suggest the desirability of a division of the work of the school vertically, so to speak, and the appointment of officers who shall severally concern themselves with the different forms of service which the school seeks to render This would call for Directors of Instruction, of Religious Life, of Benevolence, of Public Exercises, and of the Library. Of course, all these Directors must work in harmony both with one another and with the Principals of the several divisions.

Directors

The Director of Instruction

It would be the duty of the Director of Instruction to inform himself as fully and as intelligently as possible on the whole problem of the curriculum from the kindergarten to the elective classes of the adult division, and to work out a

practicable curriculum for his school. He must become acquainted with the existing literature so as to be prepared to recommend the very best available material, and adjust the theoretical curriculum to the possibilities of the literature. In consultation with the teachers and principals of divisions he would be called upon to plan and introduce a system of examinations and promotions, all the time carefully keeping his finger on the pulse of the school that he might make haste slowly and prudently. In this service he would probably need in any large school the assistance of an Examiner, who would arrange for the preparation of the questions, receive the papers and have them read, keep the record of each pupil's examinations and promotions. It would be the duty of the Director of Instruction to assist the Principals in the selection of suitable teachers, to devise means for training teachers, and perhaps himself to conduct a normal class. In a church which has a "teaching minister"—of whom we speak in a subsequent chapter—the office of Director of Instruction would naturally fall to him.

The Director of Public Exercises

The Director of Public Exercises would be called upon to study the problem of the best order of exercises—ritual or liturgy—for each division of the school, always working in harmony with the several Principals. To him would fall, of

course, the general oversight of the music of the school and the chief responsibility for rendering it in the highest degree conducive to the great religious and educational aim of the school. Such a Director might or might not share with the Principals the actual conduct of the public exercises. In any case, his great duty would be to give intelligent oversight and guidance to this important part of the work of the school.

The Director of Benevolence

The Director of Benevolence would be charged with the duty of keeping the benevolent work of the school on a high educational level, on suitable occasions expounding to the different divisions of the school the principles which underlie true and wise beneficence, and suggesting objects to which the pupils might give or the ratio of division between different objects. The task of actually receiving and disbursing funds would, of course, fall to the Treasurer, whose office is thus in a sense in the department of the Director of Benevolence.

The Director of Religious Life

The Director of Religious Life would naturally be the pastor or assistant pastor of the church. He could hardly acquire by appointment to this office any new duties, but the fact of his appointment would at the same time emphasize the religious purpose of the school and give to the pastor a recognized relation to the school. His duty would, of course, be to stimulate, encourage, direct, and assist the teachers and Principals in

making the school religiously effective. A weekly meeting for members of the secondary division, for example, conducted by him might be one of the regular appointments of that division. Class meetings might be held, pastor and teacher co-operating. But it is not necessary to enter into details at this point. The essential matter is that the pastor, as the special representative of the central religious purpose of the school, shall have a recognized place in its organization, co-operating with all other officers in bringing about the great end of the school.

The Director of the Library and the Secretary

Of the work of the Director of the Library and of that of the Chief Secretary, with tried assistants for the several divisions of the school, where such are needed, it is not necessary to speak at length. In each of the divisions valuable service may be rendered by such officers if they bring to their tasks an intelligent recognition of and sympathy with the central aim of the school and skill in adapting means to end.

The Superintendent

Finally, there is needed a President or Superintendent, whose duties would be analogous to those of the president of any institution or enterprise, including the general oversight of the school, the co-ordination of the work of its several divisions and of the several fields of effort, the stimulation and encouragement of all the workers, and the planning of new work and advance movements.

Organization as applied to small schools

But, it may be objected, will not so elaborate an organization crush out the life of the school? That depends upon the school. If it consists of one teacher and one pupil on a log in the woods, the teacher will not be helped to do his work by electing himself to half a dozen directorships, and he will find no occasion to create five divisions of the school according to the age of the pupils. Nor in a small country school which has but one room and in which a half-dozen persons must fill all the offices and do all the teaching, will it be expedient to apply in detail a plan such as we have described. Even in this case, however, it may perhaps not be without helpfulness for those on whose shoulders the responsibility for the school rests to recognize the diversified character of the work they are undertaking, and quietly to parcel among themselves the responsibility for the oversight of the different lines of work which every school should undertake to do. Thus they might say to one teacher, "Do you, besides teaching your class, give special thought to the improving of the general exercises of the school, to the end that they may be in the highest degree religiously helpful;" to another, "Do you think how we can best train our pupils in benevolence;" to the Superintendent, "Do you think how we can all improve our teaching;" and to the pastor, "Do you co-operate with us in leading our pupils

to faith in Christ and developing their religious lives."

Organization as applied to large schools

Yet it is especially for the larger schools, having pupils of all ages and a large force of workers in the church to draw from, that such an organization as that which we have described will be possible or advantageous. In many such cases we are persuaded some such plan will be in every way expedient and helpful. The very diversity of offices will keep before the mind of all the various ends which the school seeks to achieve, or rather the various means by which it seeks to achieve its one great end. The division of responsibility will secure more concentrated attention to the problems which arise in the different fields of the school's work, and will often serve to call into the service of the school ability which is unemployed for lack of a task to which it is exactly adapted.

Combination of offices

Even a school of moderate size might find substantially this form of organization advantageous, only reducing the number of officers, if not of offices, by assigning two or more of the latter to one person. Thus in some cases the pastor might be Director of Instruction as well as of Religious Life; the Superintendent might also hold the office of Director of Public Exercises, if he had taste and ability in that direction. Such combinations should, however, be personal;

that is, if the same person is elected to two or more offices, it should be because he is the best person for each of these, not because it has been decided beforehand to combine these two offices as mere offices.

Danger: How avoided

Such an organization involves, of course, some danger of disintegration and the possibility of some persons working at cross-purposes. But this danger is common to all large enterprises involving division of responsibility, and can be overcome by wise generalship on the part of the head of the school and unselfish devotion to its high aims on the part of all the co-operating workers. In at least one school of which we have knowledge these dangers have been avoided and the school, under this form of administration for years, has in that period grown greatly in numbers, and become greatly strengthened in all those elements that give a Sunday school efficiency and success.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARY.

The Sunday-school library as popularly conceived

UNLESS we mistake, Sunday-school libraries have commonly been advocated on the ground that it is necessary to furnish the members of the school with innocuous and pious reading. At the same time the conventional idea of Sunday-school books is a caricature. Whatever such literature may have been half a century or more ago—and from some of its survivals one can hardly call it virile—of late years the books which have been distributed among the members of Sunday schools, although not always of any particular literary excellence, have certainly not merited the indiscriminate ridicule and condemnation to which they have been subjected. Yet they are far from being ideal. The rank and file of Sunday-school libraries have been composed either of indifferently written books of stories, intended to inculcate such moral lessons as should be learned by the young, or of a haphazard collection of second-hand books presented by well-meaning friends much as they would present cast-off clothing to the poor.

Without entering into any discussion as to

whether such libraries are better than none — which is very possible — two principles may be laid down which must always be recognized in this connection.

The two principles to be recognized:

In the first place, whether or not the public library contains such works, every Sunday school should have a collection of books which will actually assist it to fulfil its educational function. If public schools need libraries, so do Sunday schools, and for the same reason — the assistance they can render in teaching and in study. Text-books, even the best of them, need to be supplemented by works dealing more fully with specific matter, and in a Sunday school in which the curriculum is graded, the need is all the greater. Few teachers and fewer pupils can be expected to purchase works of reference. They should be supplied by the school itself. Even if such libraries were small and limited in use to teachers, their influence and help would be considerable. The mere sight of books dealing with the subjects of study is a stimulus to study. Any instruction of teachers that is more than a "cramming" process for the next Sunday's lesson imperatively demands that there be ready for use a collection of books which may be employed by the teacher in the investigative study to which he must frequently be driven, or for the other purposes which real study presupposes.

1. The library should be educational

Books of reference

The same principle applies in the work of pupils. They too should be inducted, as far as their interests warrant, into the rapidly growing literature dealing with biblical matters. Just what these books should be will need to be determined in each case by the Director of Instruction, assisted by a well-chosen committee, but they should include introductions to the Old and New Testaments, histories of biblical times, lives of Christ and Paul, readable but scholarly commentaries, and above all a good dictionary of the Bible. To such books as these there should be added illustrative material such as maps and photographs (or photographic reproductions) of biblical places and scenes. There should be added also works of a more general interest, such as outline histories and discussions of theological and educational subjects. Finally, if such a library as this is in any way to circulate among the members of the school, it should abound in duplicates.

The sort of books demanded

2. Social needs may be met by the library

The second principle that may be said to govern Sunday-school libraries is this: the question as to whether, in addition to this reference and study library, a Sunday school should attempt to furnish general reading for a community is a matter of philanthropic policy to be classed with the matter of establishing a boys' club or a public kindergarten. If there is no

public library in the vicinity of the school, or none which furnishes the classes of books which the members of the school need, and if they have no means of obtaining suitable reading, then the school may very well supply the need. In such a case its obligation arises from a general social need, and the class of books it should place at the disposition of the community should not be exclusively religious. It should seek to supply good literature of all sorts — fiction, history, essays, biography, travels, poetry. If it has suitable accommodations, it might even open a reading-room every day and evening of the week. There is nearly always a need of some social service of this sort, and happy is the Sunday school which is blessed with such leaders and facilities that it may render it.

The sort of books demanded

One proviso of great importance should be added. In choosing books for such a general library as this, all volumes should be selected by a committee, and each volume should be read and approved by at least two persons — three would be better — before it is purchased and put into circulation. If such a committee is well chosen, the library may become an object of pride as well as real help to the school, and through it to the community.

The "reading committee"

CHAPTER VI.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL BENEVOLENCE.

The conventional view of Sunday-school benevolence

THERE are few, if any, Sunday schools in which the pupils are not asked to contribute money for one or more purposes, especially for the purchase of lesson helps, and for the other necessary matters of Sunday-school administration. In some schools an attempt is made to systematize the various collections by a double system of envelopes, one of which is used for money devoted to the expenses of the school, and the other for benevolence. In most schools, however, the money is contributed by the pupils conventionally, with little or no knowledge of the purpose to which it is appropriated. As a result the sum is small, and whatever educational power might belong to the custom is lost.

Education in benevolence in the Sunday school

In reality, the giving of money in the Sunday school fulfils its proper function only when it is regarded as a part of the educational work of the school. Not that the training in benevolence finds its ultimate aim in the reflex influence on the giver; this would be to convert benevolence itself into a subtle and refined selfishness. But inasmuch as the spirit of genuine, outgoing benev-

olence must itself be cultivated, and inasmuch as the Sunday school has for its object the training of the pupils in Christian character, it is fitting that all the giving in the Sunday school should have as a part of its aim the creation and development of this spirit. For a child to give money merely because a parent has given him a cent or two for the purpose is almost as bad as not to give at all. In fact, it may be even worse, for often it becomes a subject of ridicule.

The expenses of a Sunday school should be borne by the church

Regarded as a part of the moral and religious education of a child, the benevolence of the Sunday school should first of all be benevolence, not contribution exclusively to the expenses of the school. Of course, at this point there is involved the whole matter of the relation of the Sunday school to the church. In many places the two are practically independent, if not rivals, the pastor and officers of the church having little or no control over the management of the school. Such a divorce of the two institutions is unfortunate, and tends to create friction. It is a matter of congratulation that in many churches today the Sunday school is regarded as a department of the church, its superintendent, and perhaps other officers, being elected by the church just as the deacons and the trustees are. If once this point of view be taken, it is difficult to see why a church should not make appropriations for lesson helps

and other aids to Sunday-school work from the funds of the church itself. But in most churches the financial question is one of importance, and even though the Sunday school be regarded as a department of the church, and under the religious direction of the church officers, it will be expected to meet a portion of its expenses. There are even advantages in this to the child himself, as we shall endeavor to point out a little later, if only the matter be treated in a pedagogical way, and not left to the inertia of mere custom.

How to awaken interest in objects of benevolence

As a part, then, of the moral and religious training of the child, the benevolence of the Sunday school should cultivate genuine, unselfish, thoughtful giving. This involves the giving of that which has real value in the eyes of the giver, interest in the persons affected by the gift, and in due time an intelligent choice among various objects of benevolence. It is a great mistake to train a child in habits of perfunctory and thoughtless giving. The charity that consists in giving away old clothes and toys which the child no longer needs or cares for, to persons of whom he knows nothing and in whom he feels no interest, has little value to the recipient and is almost wholly destitute of educational value for the giver. It may even be harmful to both, embittering the recipient and producing in the giver a pride and

self-satisfaction that is as selfish in the child as it is in the adult.

Let the objects of benevolence be definite

The child should be made to have an interest in the object to which he is contributing. There are many ways, of course, of accomplishing this, but perhaps the most necessary requirement is that the object be definite, and so presented to the child as to enable him to form a distinct conception of its need of assistance. There is, of course, a large need for arousing children's interest—for example, in the general cause of missions—but the surest way of accomplishing this end is not by discussing the matter in a broad way, which might very well appeal to men and women, but in the presentation of a certain definite field, or, better still, of a certain definite school or church or worker. Some schools, for example, have very little difficulty in supporting a native preacher in some foreign field. Other schools send specific sums to certain specific schools for certain definite purposes. It makes little difference what the object is, provided that its needs are so definitely stated that the pupils are aroused to the sense of need and to a desire to help.

Training in habits of choice in benevolence

But interest is, after all, but one element in the education in benevolence. As the child grows into maturity, he will find that the great need in charitable work is a rational choice as to what he shall help. The habit of making such

choice, and not trusting to a momentary impulse, is one which should be cultivated in the child from the moment when he begins to give, and probably the most effectual way of inducing such a habit is for the person who has the benevolence of the Sunday school in charge to present to the school two or three objects to which the school's contributions can be appropriated, letting the school itself decide by a majority of votes as to which object shall receive the money. If it be possible, it would be well by a little judicious prearrangement to cause a discussion to spring up over the various subjects suggested, in order that the arguments for each, and the relative importance and need of each, may be definitely understood by the members of the school before voting. In fact, simply to have a formal vote in which the children on the impulse of the moment decide, under the direction of their elders, is bad. At the very least each subject should be presented carefully by some competent person, and the vote taken by ballot immediately after the presentation of the proposed objects, or the following Sunday. It would be a great mistake to think that children will not be interested, and that they will vote without having definite reasons.

Let the pupils discuss and vote

But while the pupil is thus trained to give for objects wholly outside the sphere of his own self-interest, parallel with this training it is eminently

Self-support

wise that he should become accustomed to give for other things from which he himself derives benefit. If he gives a part of his contributions for the purchase of books and papers, and other like expenses of the Sunday school itself, this will gradually bring home to his mind the fact that the maintenance of the Sunday school costs money, and gradually inculcate the principle of self-support, and so prepare him in maturer years to take his share in the maintenance and support of the church. While every school has its own general system for benevolence, the following plan may be worth consideration: Divide the total amount contributed by the school into three parts, one part to be used for the expenses of the school, the second to be appropriated as a whole to some definite object which has been selected by the school, and the third portion to be kept as a fund from which special appropriations can be made by the school to such various objects as may be presented. A special collection for a definite object of charity is likely to be the worst sort of education in generosity, for it increases the dangerous habit of giving money upon the impulse of a moment rather than deliberately. It is a great safeguard for the school to have it distinctly understood that no object of charity shall be presented to the school without the consent of the committee

Specific suggestions

having the benevolence in charge, and that, even when objects are presented, any aid given shall be taken from a definite fund which must be administered with some attempt at keeping the proper proportion between various objects worthy of support.

The administration of benevolence

All this makes it evident that it is impossible to leave the administration of benevolence to the haphazard methods of some Sunday schools. There should be a committee appointed to have the matter in charge, and it will be well to have the committee of considerable size, in order that as many as possible may be interested in the matter. Such a committee should see to it, not only that the objects among which the school is to choose are carefully presented, but also that church festivals, like Christmas, Easter, and Children's Day, become new opportunities for awakening a new generosity. No Christmas entertainment should omit the contributions made by children to others, and the committee should insist that in such contributions the child should give away that which is of value, and not merely that which is spoiled. By the testimony of all schools which have adopted it, this feature is the most delightful portion of the Christmas entertainment. The committee will also see that, after these gifts have been contributed, a report of how they were distributed is made to

the school, and thus the child's sympathies be carried directly to the institution or person to whom he has made the contribution.

The desired result of these plans

Thus regarded as a part of the educational process and administered as a distinct and legitimate department of the school, the matter of benevolence will cease to be purely formal, and will become as serviceable in the formation of character as the study of the lesson itself.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FUNCTION OF A SUNDAY-SCHOOL RITUAL.

The ritual of the Sunday school as an educational agency

IT would be difficult to find a Sunday school that has not some kind of ritual; that is, some kind of service made up of prayer, music, Scripture reading, etc., preceding or following the study of the Bible lesson. But what proper place is there for such exercises in the Sunday school? The Sunday school is an educational institution in which the study and teaching of the Bible occupy the central place. Why should it have a ritual? The answer is, we believe, clear, and important in its bearing on the other question, what kind of ritual the Sunday school ought to have. The Sunday school is an educational institution, but the definition must not be taken too narrowly; it is not merely a Bible school. Its ultimate and comprehensive aim is the moral and religious education of the members of the school. To this end the teaching of the Bible is one means —the chief one, indeed, but not necessarily the only one. In such teaching religious education is sought chiefly through instruction of the mind, through the presentation of the great facts of

biblical history and the great truths of biblical revelation. But education—it is pre-eminently true of the religious side of education—can never be purely intellectual. The religious feelings need cultivation and education as truly as the mind requires religious instruction.

The education of the emotions

In this fact, and in the comprehensive definition of the function of the Sunday school as the religious education of the pupils, are found at once the justification of the ritual and the guiding principle for determining its character. While the teaching hour makes its chief appeal to the mind, the ritual service has relation chiefly to the cultivation of the emotions.

Let it not be supposed that the two elements, the intellectual and the emotional, can be wholly divorced from each other. There must be feeling, reverence, and love of truth, admiration for noble character, detestation of wickedness, in connection with the study of the Bible, if this is to be most effective. There must be thought and even instruction in the ritual, or it will fail to make its due appeal to the emotions. But the distinction of emphasis remains. Broadly speaking, the teaching hour appeals to the intellect, the ritual service to the feelings.

The feelings which the ritual should cultivate

What, then, are the feelings which the Sunday-school ritual should seek to cultivate? We answer: reverence, adoration, love, penitence,

aspiration, hope. Central in the whole service must be the aim to bring before the mind the thought—a true thought—of God in the perfection of his character, in the majesty of his holiness, in the infinitude of his love and mercy. This is to be accomplished, not by formal instruction concerning the divine nature, or chiefly by the recitation of a creed. It is rather to be attained by the reading or recitation of such sentences of Scripture as express in exalted and poetic language the adoration of those clear-sighted and reverent souls who have gained a vision of God; by the singing of hymns in which godly men and women have sought to express the emotions of their souls; and by prayer in which, whether one speak while the others follow only with the mind and heart, or all join in unison, the hearts of all shall be lifted to God together. Such reverent, and, in the proper sense of the word, solemn, bringing before the mind of the thought of God is calculated as is no other means to call forth and develop our religious emotions.

The means of cultivating them

When in an atmosphere, not of cold definition, of heated controversy, or of didactic exactness, but of elevated and sincere praise, we gain a vision of God as the almighty, the ever-living, perfect in holiness and boundless in mercy, then our hearts learn to revere, to adore, to love.

Then, too, touched as we never could be by mere instruction, we are moved to penitent grief over our own sins; then we long to rise to higher planes of life ourselves, to enter into fellowship with God himself, and, gaining confidence from the contemplation of God's goodness, begin to hope that what we long for may still be attained. In this atmosphere animosities cease, petty ambitions die away, and the love to our fellow-men that before perhaps seemed impossible begins to take possession of the heart.

The characteristics of a proper ritual

What kind of ritual will accomplish these ends? In the first place, the service must be dignified. By this is not meant that it must be cold and dead, but that it must be serious and calculated to cultivate seriousness. The precise degree and type of dignity that are expedient in any given school must be determined with great wisdom in view of the class of pupils of which the school is made up. A service that would be wholly suitable, impressive, and elevating in a school made up of pupils drawn from cultivated Christian families might be absurd and impossible in a mission school in the city or on the frontier. Regard must be had to the age of the pupils also. Wherever the size of the school and the structure of the building permit it, it is desirable that there should be separate exercises for different divisions of the school. A service

Dignified

Adapted to the various Divisions

adapted to the youngest pupils cannot be constantly helpful to adults; the converse is even more emphatically true. But whatever the age or the intelligence of the pupils, the elements which compose the service and the manner of those who conduct it should both be such as to cultivate reverence. Songs that belittle and cheapen religion, leaders who turn the service into a drill in singing, librarians who distribute books while the service is in progress, superintendents who are unable to maintain control and secure quiet—all these tend to defeat the true ends of the Sunday-school service.

Cheerful

But while it is dignified, the service ought also to be cheerful. Nowhere is a sad and saddening service more out of place than in the Sunday school. Young people are prone enough to regard religion as sad and gloomy. The Sunday school ought to do nothing which will foster this idea. There may be times when it is desirable in some part of the Sunday-school service so to emphasize the fact of sin and the need of repentance as to give a note of sadness to that part. But this should not be the prevailing note. The gospel is good news; good news even for sinners, since there is forgiveness for those who repent. The keynote of the Sunday school should be a joyous one.

The service ought to be one in which all can

take some part. This is less important in the case of the adult division of the school, if its services are held apart from those of the rest of the school, than in the other divisions; but it holds in general for every part of the school. A service which makes its appeal to the feelings from without may awaken emotion, but to cultivate the religious feelings, to educate them, they must be given opportunity for expression. Such opportunity may be afforded by responsive reading, by prayer in unison, by singing. Incidentally, this will help in maintaining order and dignity by holding the attention and maintaining the interest of the pupils. But it has its deeper reason in the fact that it is necessary to the attainment of the proper educational purpose of the service.

One in which all can share

Finally, the whole service should be characterized by the note of sincerity and reality. Nothing should be done in a spirit of vain show. The service should not compel the expression of sentiments which those who join in this service cannot be reasonably expected actually to entertain. It should tend to lift all who join in it to a higher moral plane, but it should not seek to do this by calling upon them to affirm things which it is practically impossible for them to affirm truly. There ought, therefore, to be something of flexibility in the service, and on the part of the leader a mind quick to recognize the variations in the

Adapted to the changing condition of the school

condition of the school. A service which would be wholly appropriate in the midst of the relative relaxation of a summer vacation might be wholly unsuitable in a period of intenser religious activity and deeper religious feeling in midwinter. Sometimes it may be wise to emphasize this necessity of sincerity by asking only those to join in a certain part of the service who can do so sincerely. But to resort to this expedient often would cultivate an unhealthy habit of introspection or defeat the very end which it was intended to secure.

Music in the Sunday school

A word or two concerning the music in particular. Much has been written in criticism of the songs in common use in the Sunday school, both of the words and of the music. And certainly it would be difficult to speak too severely of many of these songs. But in truth what needs to be said about the music is simply what we have already said concerning the service in general. It should be dignified, cheerful, adapted to the occasion and to those who are to join in it, and hence capable of being shared in by all, above all pervaded by the note of sincerity. If it meets these conditions it will exclude both the weakly sentimental songs which help either to emasculate religion or make it repulsive, and the "catchy" tunes which are fitted rather to the street ballad than to the hymn. It may be laid

down as a rule to which there are few exceptions, at least above the kindergarten, that the songs of the Sunday school should be real lyrics, not religious ballads. But the principle of adaptation to the age of pupils applies here only less strictly than in the matter of instruction. It is as absurd to ask children of ten years to sing hymns reflecting the experiences of mature men and women as to ask their fathers and grandfathers to join in distinctively children's songs. Some hymns of praise are perhaps adapted to old and young alike. But the musical service of the school can be what it ought to be only when there is some separation of the school into divisions for the service as well as for the teaching. Each division needs its own hymns, and these, while always real hymns, should be adapted to the relative maturity of the members of that division.

The hymn itself should be considered

The ritual of the Sunday schools is deserving of the most careful study on the part of all who are interested in promoting the efficiency of the Sunday school. Important and central as is the study of the Bible, the ritual has yet its own distinct educational value, and should never be crowded into the position of a mere appendage to the teaching hour. The experiment has been tried in some schools of dividing the Sunday-school hour into two quite distinct portions, the first given to the teaching of the lesson, preceded

The neglect of the ritual

The double service

perhaps by a single hymn or a brief prayer; the second to the service, thus securing greater continuity and impressiveness, and avoiding the conversion of the opening exercises into a mere leeway for the arrival of tardy teachers and pupils. It has been eminently successful in some cases, and is worthy of serious consideration by other schools. The employment of a printed order of service, varied from time to time, has likewise been found to be helpful in many schools. But whatever the methods employed—and no one method will be adapted to all schools—the improvement of the ritual is one of the pressing needs in Sunday-school work.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TEACHING MINISTRY.

The ministry of New Testament times

Is OUR title a misnomer? Is the word "minister" synonymous with "preacher?" The ideal church of the New Testament is one in which each member is fitted by the Holy Spirit for a particular function, or kind of service, for the good of the whole body, and each is performing that function. Prominent among these functions in the New Testament times were those of apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, evangelist, the two functions of pastor and teacher being apparently closely associated. The apostolic function, as it existed in the apostolic age, ceased with that age, its nearest modern analogue being that of the missionary. To the work of the prophet, who stood forth with his message from God to speak to the people on behalf of God, the work of the modern preacher corresponds most closely. The pastoral function is represented by the pastor as the leader and shepherd of the people, and by all those who join with him in like service. Of the work of the evangelist it is not needful to speak here.

But what has become of the teacher? He has

The disappearance of the teacher

his representatives, no doubt, in the Superintendent of the Sunday school and in the teachers who work under his oversight. But what means does the church employ to see that it is provided with competent teachers? In the early days of the church, prophets, pastors, evangelists, and teachers alike sprang from the body of the church, and entered upon their work without special training for it. Little by little, under the guidance, as we believe, of the same Spirit that in the beginning gave to the church apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, it has come to be recognized that, in order to render the service to which they are called, missionaries and pastors and evangelists and preachers must be trained for their work. But by a singular oversight, difficult to account for, the teacher, in the sense in which the word is used in the New Testament, has apparently been overlooked. We have trained teachers of mathematics and history and pagan literature in our colleges and academies. We have teachers of the Bible and history and theology in our theological schools. But the religious teachers of the young in the church and Sunday school have been left in large part without training. Our preachers and pastors to whom by eminence we apply the term "minister" have as a rule had some sort of special training for their work; and even in those rare cases in which a man steps at once

from some other occupation into preaching and pastoral work he is enabled by the exclusive devotion of himself to his work to be constantly training himself for it. But in how many churches is there found a teacher, or one in charge of the teaching work, who has been trained for it by years of study, or who is enabled to train himself for it by the devotion of his whole time and energy to it? Churches that have but one minister who devotes his whole time to the service of the church demand that he be a good preacher and a good pastor. Who ever asks whether he is a good teacher? In the larger churches, in which there are two or more ministers, one of whom assumes special responsibility for the preaching, and the others of whom are engaged in different forms of pastoral service, it is insisted that each shall be fitted for his special work. In how many churches is there also a trained minister engaged in and in charge of the work of teaching? There are a few such, but they are very few.

This depreciation of teaching unjustifiable

Is there any justification for this relatively greater emphasis on the preaching and pastoral ministry as compared with the teaching ministry? Certainly not in the New Testament. Certainly not in the needs of the church today. There is no need to underestimate the work of the prophetic and the pastoral ministers in order to set the teaching ministry in its true light. Their work

is most important, most divine and helpful; most necessary "for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." But is it more important, more influential on the future of the church and the world, than the teaching of the young, whose ideas of truth are as yet in process of formation, whose characters are still plastic and sensitive, whose future is now in the making? And is this teaching work so much less important than the preaching and shepherding work that, while we rightly demand of the preacher and the pastor that he spend anywhere from two to ten years in preparing for his work, the work of teaching can be committed to men and women most of whom never spent three months in any special preparation for their work, and whose work is performed under the guidance of a Superintendent who is, in the majority of cases, equally innocent of preparation? It is impossible to believe that this state of things is sound. One can only marvel that it has been permitted to continue so long.

The remedy

But what is the remedy? Many teachers are needed in the Sunday school. It is impossible that they should all spend years of study in preparing for their work. True; but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility, nor is it unreasonable to demand, that, if not in every church, yet in many churches, there should be one thor-

oughly trained teacher, who should himself teach, oversee the work of the other teachers, and train them for their work. Such a teaching minister is today a necessity to every well-organized church. And he needs as thorough training for his work as the preacher and the pastor. No work in the church can possibly be more responsible or important than his. Let the teaching of the children and youth be in competent hands, and we may almost cease anxiety as to who does the preaching. In a previous chapter, speaking from the point of view of things as they are, each church having as a rule but one minister, we have insisted upon the necessity of the pastor being the teacher of the teachers. We do not retract that, but urge as something still better that the diversity of function which the New Testament recognizes shall be revived and a teaching ministry be built up alongside of the prophetic ministry. If, indeed, a church can afford to support only one educated minister, then that minister should be just as much a teacher as he is preacher and pastor; he ought to be as thoroughly trained for his teaching as for either of the other departments of his ministry. And if he is thus trained for the teaching work of the church, the Sunday school should be as fully under his oversight as the preaching or the pastoral work. But if a church is able to maintain a plurality of minis-

The teaching pastor

ters it should provide for itself a teaching minister quite as certainly as a preaching minister, and should insist upon his being equipped for his work with the same insistence with which it demands a good preacher.

The work of the teaching pastor

But if a church has such a minister, what can he do? In the first place, he can himself give instruction. He can teach the adults of the church in a service specially devoted to this, and the young people in connection with the Society of Christian Endeavor or other like organization, and the teachers of the Sunday school, giving to these latter instruction both in the Bible itself and in principles and methods of teaching. Yet his greater work must be more fundamental than this. It must aim at the conversion of the Sunday school into a genuine educational institution, organized and conducted on sound educational principles. This will involve the construction of a course of study based upon intelligent conceptions of the Bible and broad knowledge of it, as well as upon sound pedagogical principles. Then, by selecting from among those who are available for the work of teaching one or more teachers for each year's work included in the curriculum, he can set about the training of these teachers, each for the particular work which he or she is to do.

Not that each teacher is to know nothing

but the year's work which he or she teaches. To know nothing but this would be to fail of really knowing this. Each teacher should, if possible, have gone through the whole course of study, and in course of time it will be possible to limit the selection of teachers to those who have already done this. But meantime, and even when this is the case, each teacher ought to be specially trained for the particular work assigned to him or her, and so become really competent to do the work thoroughly and well. Thus little by little a body of trained teachers may be built up, each of whom can do competently his own special work. Under the system now generally prevalent this is almost impossible, and is becoming constantly more difficult.

A word of appreciation for the rank and file of Sunday-school teachers

We do not forget the noble company of intelligent and able men and women who are giving time, energy, and ability to the teaching of classes in the Sunday school. They have wrought nobly and fruitfully. But the most intelligent of them would be foremost in insisting that the system that lays upon a teacher who has had no opportunity for special biblical study the task of teaching the prophecy of Jeremiah today, and six months hence the book of Acts, and the year after, Hebrews or Romans, thus demanding knowledge of the whole Bible with no opportunity to know thoroughly any part

of it, can only be endured till a better plan can be devised and put into effect.

Two urgent needs of the Sunday school

The two things indispensable to such better plan are a teaching ministry for the oversight and conduct of the teaching in each church and an intelligently constructed curriculum of study. Both are so urgently needed that it is difficult to assign to either precedence over the other. The church ought not to have to wait long for either.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.

EXAMINATIONS GIVEN IN THE HYDE PARK BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL, CHICAGO.

FOURTH GRADE: THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

1. What are the kinds of books found in the Bible?

2. Place opposite the name of each book the kind of book; for example:

Genesis, History and Story,
Exodus,
Leviticus,
Numbers,
Deuteronomy,
Joshua,
Judges,
Ruth,
1 Samuel,
2 Samuel,
1 Kings,
2 Kings,
1 Chronicles,
2 Chronicles,
Ezra,
Nehemiah,
Esther,
Job,
The Psalms,
The Proverbs,
Ecclesiastes,
The Song of Songs,
Isaiah,
Jeremiah,
Lamentations,
Ezekiel,
Daniel,
Hosea,
Joel,
Amos,
Obadiah,
Jonah,
Micah,
Nahum,
Habakkuk,
Zephaniah,
Haggai,
Zechariah,
Malachi,

Matthew,
Mark,
Luke,
John,
The Acts,
To the Romans,
1 Corinthians,
2 Corinthians,
To the Galatians,
To the Ephesians,
To the Philippians,
To the Colossians,
1 Thessalonians,
2 Thessalonians,
1 Timothy,
2 Timothy,
To Titus,
To Philemon,
To the Hebrews,
James,
1 Peter,
2 Peter,
1 John,
2 John,
3 John,
Jude,
Revelation,

3. What kind of stories are found in Genesis?

4. Name four famous men in the book of Genesis.

5. What stories from the book of Judges can you name?

6. In what book are the stories of Samuel?

7. What stories about David do you remember?

8. Name three Old Testament preachers.

9. In what city did many of them preach?

10. What is the name of the hymn book in the Bible?

11. What four books all tell the same story?

12. Name the story about Jesus which you like best.

Will the parents please assist the pupils by seeing that an honest effort is made to answer these questions? The Bible may be used in answering the questions.

SEVENTH GRADE: THREE GREAT APOSTLES.

1. Where and why did Paul gather the great collection for the Christians at Jerusalem?

2. In what way did Paul prove that he was a true apostle of Christ?

3. By whom was the Church of Rome probably founded, and why did not Paul go there from Corinth?

4. How does Paul describe the gospel of Christ in his letter to the Romans?

5. Describe Paul's return journey from Corinth to Jerusalem, and tell how he was received in Jerusalem?

6. What charge did the Jews make against Paul in his trial before Felix?

7. Why was Paul pleased to speak before Agrippa? Why was Paul not set free?

8. Name the principal places passed in Paul's journey to Rome. How did Paul encourage the sailors when in danger of shipwreck?

9. How did Paul spend his time while awaiting his trial in Rome?

10. What are some of the things in Paul's character which you most admire?

EIGHTH GRADE: THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

(To be answered in writing, using the New Testament, if you wish, but no personal help.)

1. Tell what you know about the writer of the second gospel.

2. Who is the first person spoken of in the gospel of Mark? Tell briefly what the gospel says about his way of living and his work.

3. What are the first two events of Jesus' life related in this gospel?

4. What is the first miracle of Jesus related in this gospel?

5. Make a list of the miracles of healing (including cases of demoniacs) narrated in the first five chapters of Mark.

6. What answer did Jesus give to those who urged

him to return to Capernaum (1 : 38)? What is the meaning of the answer?

7. For what five things did the Pharisees find fault with Jesus as related in 2 : 1—3 : 6?

8. State briefly how he answered each of these criticisms.

9. Write the list of the apostles. Which of these are mentioned in the gospel previous to the record of their appointment as apostles?

10. What answer did Jesus make to the charge that he cast out demons by the prince of demons?

11. Who did Jesus say were his brothers and sisters?

12. Name the parables of the kingdom in the fourth chapter of Mark.

13. State what you understand to be the central teaching of each one.

14. What reason did Jesus give for teaching in parables in 4 : 10–12, and 4 : 21, 22?

15. Tell briefly the story of Jesus calming the storm.

16. Tell very briefly the story of the Gerasene demoniac.

17. What was the usual cry of the demoniacs when they saw Jesus?

18. In what part of Palestine did all the events narrated in 1 : 14—4 : 41 take place?

19. In what city are certain of them said to have occurred? Where is this city?

TENTH GRADE: THE BOOK OF AMOS.

1. Where was Amos's home?

2. What was his occupation before he became a prophet?

3. To whom did he preach?

4. Name the foreign nations whose punishment he announced.

5. State the sins which Amos charges against each of these foreign nations.

6. Why did Amos tell Israel of the coming judgment upon these foreign nations?

7. State the sins Amos charges against Israel in chaps. 2 and 3.

8. What was a Nazarite (2 : 11)?

9. Who were the Amorites (2 : 9, 10)?

10. Where was Bethel and why does Amos in 3 : 14 especially select it for punishment?

Date Due