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SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER-TRAINING

H.M. HAMILL

(Hamill)

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SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER-TRAINING



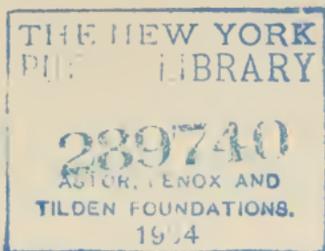
By H. M. HAMILL, D.D.

Superintendent of Teacher-Training Work in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and Chairman of the Educational Committee of the International Sunday - School Convention ; author of "Legion of Honor Normal Course of Study," "The Sunday-School Teacher," "International Lesson History," "The Bible and Its Books," etc.



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A. S.



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I BEG pardon for a personal word. I begin this series of chapters with no small embarrassment.

I have neither sought nor shunned the call to write them. I have been a teacher most of my life. I have been trying to train Sunday-school teachers for twenty years. Mr. B. F. Jacobs laid hand upon me, and gave me charge of teacher-training in a great Sunday-school state. In the larger International field I did what I could to solve this greatest of all Sunday-school problems. I am harder at work upon it now than ever, in the service of the church of my fathers. I long ago began to know the difficulties in the way, but I have seen most of them overcome. I love the work. I shall at least put my heart into these chapters. If I can only make them hopeful and helpful to those who may read them, I shall be happy indeed.

H. M. H.

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IS TEACHER-TRAINING NEEDED?

I

IS TEACHER-TRAINING NEEDED ?

BY DAY and by night it is the thought of the great host of American Sunday-school teachers, many of whom I know and all of whom I love, that comforts and cheers me in my work. If one can help at all to solve the problem that confronts and hinders them, it will be labor well spent. And behind these teachers now teaching is another even greater host. It is the young people of the church who are to teach and train when we are gone. What can be done for them? If teacher-training means much to the teacher at work, it means much more to the young man or woman whose life work is yet to begin.

The first reason why I believe teacher-training is needed is that our teachers, and our young people who are willing to teach, sincerely and generally desire it. In fifteen years of Sunday-school work I have met very many of both classes,—in Canada and the United States, in the big cities and little villages, in the finely equipped schools of modern pattern and in the log and sod houses of the frontier, in conventions great and small, individually and collectively. Comparatively few of them were really indifferent. Some of them teach perfunctorily, because they know nothing better. Most of them sincerely desire to become better teachers, if only the way would open.

I have watched them at conventions, some of

them coming long distances at large expense. I have seen them scanning the program anxiously to see if it had anything to help the teacher. I have noted their eager, upturned faces, always pathetic in their keen desire to find something in the speaker's words that would help them teach next Sunday's lesson. Name a teacher-training book, and quickly would come the inquiry, "Where can it be bought?" "What will it cost?" Whoever taught a lesson from the Bible to these teachers and young people as a teaching model but noted the quick flash of the eye and flush of the cheek if his work was skilfully done? I know the meaning of that flushed cheek. I have seen it so many times when Jacobs and Schauffler and Miss Harlow taught. It means, "I want to be a better Sunday-school teacher. How can I learn to do it?"

I have two recent letters lying on my desk. One is from Columbia, South Carolina.

DEAR SIR :

I am anxious to take up the teacher-training course of our church. I feel a little afraid to undertake it, as I am just a young girl with little time or experience to help me along ; but I am very much interested in Sunday-school work, and, with God's help, I will try and do the very best I can to become a good teacher, Hoping to hear from you very soon.

I am respectfully,

R. B.

The other is from Lynchburg, Virginia.

DEAR DR. HAMILL :

Your letter received, stating that I was the first to complete the full teacher-training course. I am glad to know that the old Dominion's representative came out first, and

that the honor fell on one of old Centenary's teachers. I have eighty-one scholars in my Sunday-school class, and am also superintendent of our Home Department, numbering several hundred, which is the largest in Virginia. Every teacher in our church should complete the full training course.

M. M. G.

In these two letters extremes meet, and prove my point. The Lynchburg teacher was already one of the best in the South, a degree man from several schools and colleges, but among the first to respond to the teacher-training call of his church. The girl from South Carolina speaks for many thousands like her, with little time or experience to help, but wanting to "try and do the very best to become a good teacher." And because I am sure of my ground, I say that, wherever teacher-training fails, it is not the fault of the teachers or the young people.

WHAT THE AGE DEMANDS IS ELECTRIC

It is the "electric age. At ten years of age, I reveled in a stage-coach ride of sixty miles a day. Last month I covered the same route and distance in an hour. At twenty, I was guest in a hotel that burned gas, and was mindful "not to blow it out." At thirty, I marveled over my first electric light. "The old order passeth." The youth of the day sees more, hears more, and often knows more things, than came to his grandfather in a lifetime. If he is not as wise, it is not for lack of knowledge. The multiplying cities, the great railroad systems, the long-distance telephone, the public library, the lyceum, the Chautauqua, the "little red schoolhouse," the

penny daily, the Sunday-school "lesson-leaf," are Aladdin's lamp to our boys and girls. If he is a country lad, the rural route rider lays the big world daily at his door. I heard a boy of fifteen recently, in a country day-school, classify and summarize the news of the world from his father's daily in a way that would have made Thomas Jefferson gasp.

What does this mean to the Sunday-school teacher? It means that this boy, alert, wide awake, insistent, seeing and hearing many things, and always on the lookout for more, is his Sunday-school scholar. It means that he is taught by the finest day-school teachers in the world, and is not averse, as I am, to drawing odious comparisons between the teachers of his public school and the man or woman who teaches him on Sunday. It means that he knows good teaching from bad, and whether the Sunday-school teacher's Bible knowledge is genuine and thorough or mere "make-believe." The other day I saw from my car window a wagon-load of darkeys, big and little, drawn by an old gray mule, trying to race with our Limited Express. The public-school teacher is the "Limited," and the Sunday-school teacher who makes mock of his work, and sneers at teacher-training, is the gray mule. Spilman, our Baptist field man, tells of the young North-Carolinian who refused to go to Sunday-school, though one of the best learners of the village day-school. "They teach a feller something down here," he protested, "but up there"—with a look of disgust towards the village church—"they just mess with me."

THE CHURCH IS CONCERNED ABOUT IT

And well it may be. For a hundred and fifty years of American Protestantism the church has concerned itself chiefly over the message from the pulpit, and paid little heed to the lesson from the pew. Big preachers, high-priced evangelists, costly choirs, luxurious "auditoriums," were the accessories of public worship. Subterranean "basements," bare floors, dust, smoke, niggardly equipment in the way of books, libraries, maps, blackboards, etc., have usually been good enough for the Sunday-school—a sort of juvenile purgatory through which the child might work his way to the church heaven above-stairs. The stanch old Catholic Church, in spite of what we don't agree with in it, might well be our example. That church's concern for the child, and for the teaching of the child, as against the churchly needs of the adult, is as three to one. The morning mass is good enough for the one, but the finest Jesuitical teaching is not too good for the other. I think I know a hundred of our fine city churches whose quartets and choirs cost more money per annum than would hire the finest teacher-training experts for their Sunday-schools. Within four years I know of one great denomination, that counts its Sunday-school scholars by the millions, voting down an appropriation of only three thousand dollars a year to keep an expert in the field at the service of its teachers, though lavish in its expenditure for the salvation of the heathen.

I am glad to note, however, the breaking up of the old idea that great sermons, adult conversions,

and "go-as-you-please" Sunday-schools, is the scriptural order. When a state constitutional convention, as the papers inform us, can spend an entire week debating how to improve its public schools, church synods, convocations, and conferences may well take hint. Denver—Chicago—Winona! Of what are these three names the sign? At Denver, in June of 1902, two thousand picked representatives of American churches came together into their triennial International Sunday-school Convention. At first it was a question of many opinions as to what kind of Sunday-school lessons should be taught. At the last, after days of discussion, as one voice it was the judgment that, whatever the system of Bible study, the Sunday-school teacher, rather than the Sunday-school lesson, should hereafter be the chief concern. At Chicago, eight months later, the "Religious Education Association," with four hundred pastors and college men, met to consider the whole field of related religious education. Their final word, as at Denver, was the need of trained Sunday-school teachers. At Winona, in August of 1903, the elect men and women of the management of American Sunday-school work were in council for a week, and the making of Sunday-school pastors and the training of Sunday-school teachers were the dominant themes.

Already I could name six or more of the greater churches which have recently erected, or are beginning to erect, teacher-training departments, and are putting training-courses and men into the field. In a later chapter in this book I shall have something to say of the great work they are doing. And

of the nearly sixty inter-denominational state and provincial Sunday-school Associations which constitute the International Convention, several of them have been doing systematic and efficient teacher-training work among the churches, while all of them have formally approved, and most of them have entered upon it.

Sixteen years ago, when I began my Sunday-school rounds as an itinerant teacher-trainer, I can recall not a few humiliating experiences in the presence of the dignitaries of the church, as I pleaded for an *ex cathedra* endorsement of teacher-training. Brethren whose divinity had been well doctored would eye me askance under the rims of their gold glasses as if I were vender of some sort of pious popcorn or patent medicine. Times have changed, and the doctors have been changed by them. I am not as lonesome nowadays, and the "popcorn" business has grown and prospered.

THE WAY IS OPENING

Whether through denominational or interdenominational agency, the time must come when the untrained Sunday-school teacher will be without excuse or standing. The growth of public sentiment is slow but sure, and when fully aroused it is resistless. I have tried to show how that sentiment is crystalizing about the work of the Sunday-school teacher. Years ago, when Horace Mann was opening the way, politicians and legislators made mock of his plea for thoroughly trained secular teachers. We all know how that battle was fought and won. The teachers

wanted it, the patrons of the schools began to favor it, the taxpayers finally demanded it. Now a costly normal school, within reach of and free to every public-school teacher, is taken for granted. But it took more than fifty years to bring it to pass. I can remember when a Methodist bishop took his fling at college-bred preachers and preaching, and carried the laugh of the conference with him. Look for him now, and you will find him—in the cemetery. Every plea that was made, every battle that was fought for a trained ministry, is now upon the side of trained Sunday-school teachers. We are heirs of all the promises as well as the achievements of secular or religious educational history. My field of labor is in a section rightly looked upon as conservative and a little old-fashioned, particularly in religious habits and opinions. I only wish the readers of *The Sunday School Times* could make my rounds with me, and see something of the graciousness, for my work's sake, of my bishops and ministerial brethren. And what is true of my own field and work is true of other fields and men.

There is no trouble about the opening of the "way." Lying on my desk is the report of a college professor who is using his spare hours to organize and conduct class after class in teacher-training, with a roll of probably two hundred students in one city. Letters come to me from pastors wanting to know how to go about forming teacher-training classes. Here is what a plain country superintendent writes: "My school is small and away from the railroad. But I have been reading of teacher-training plans, and I think we

can do as well in the country as in the city. I am sure we need it. My hardest trial is to get good teachers. I send you twelve names, including my officers and teachers and some young people who I believe have the making of good teachers in them. We propose to go through with it to the end, and I intend, as superintendent, to keep in the lead."

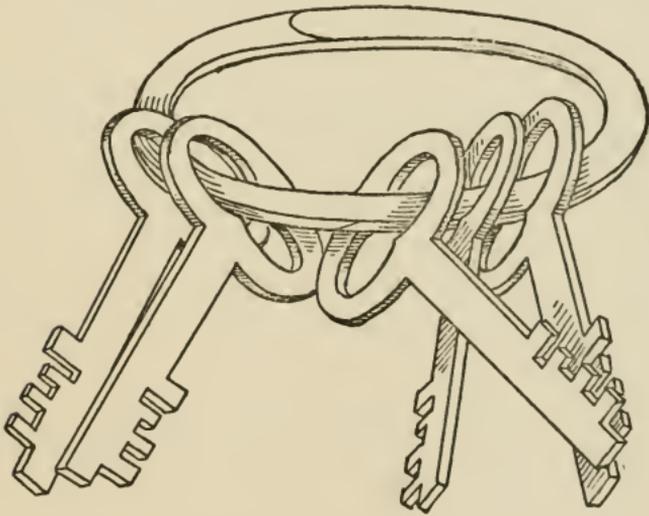
Here is another from a young pastor : "Nothing has so stirred up my Sunday-school and helped my teachers as the training-books we are now studying. I can see the change coming over them." In nine out of ten such letters there is not a hint of expert leadership. Much as they would like to have that they are not wasting time looking for it. Here and there is a good Christian public-school or college man who can be had as leader for the asking, but in the main it is like a young man who wrote : "I need it, and I am going to have it. I would like to join with others in a class. I intend to try to get others in the school to join with me, but, if I fail, you can count on me single-handed and alone." This last letter struck the keynote. The "way" is always open to one who has a "will" to do it. It is the teacher who says "You can count on me single-handed and alone" that I am counting on.

WHO SHOULD DO IT ?

II

WHO SHOULD DO IT?

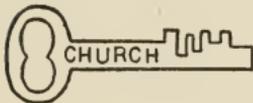
I HAVE a bunch of five teacher-training keys, each thoroughly fitted and trusty. They are "skeleton" keys, which means that they fit any teacher-training lock, wherever and whatever it may be. Take any one of the keys, try it upon any lock, and the door will open. You may have to use it upon a succession of doors before you come upon what you are seeking,



but, if you fail, the fault is not in the key. I have given to each of my keys a name, and I believe I can put the five keys at work in such a way that not a door of hindrance to teacher-training will continue closed. If I could be allowed to use them all at once,

every key turning and every door opening, the problem of teacher-training would speedily be solved. You will notice, however, that three of my keys have been little used and are growing rusty. Whatever has been done in ways of teacher-training is to the credit of two keys only, and even these have been sparingly and awkwardly used. Let us take up the keys one by one, and consider what each, in order, might do.

THE CHURCH KEY



The Church Key comes first. The training of Sunday-school teachers will continue to be an incident until the churches, *per se*, shall grapple with it. More than a score of denominations, small and great, constitute the International Sunday-school Convention. Some of them count their schools by the tens of thousands. Most of them have money and men at command for every possible problem. All of them are beginning to see that a grave question affecting their future growth is that of trained Sunday-school teachers.

Yet for nearly fifty years, since the Rev. John H. Vincent as pastor at Joliet, Illinois, in 1857, organized the first teacher-training class known to church history, the Church Key has been hanging rusty on an unopened door. The trouble was that the church unwisely handed over the key to the Chautauqua movement in 1874, and the one hundred or more summer assemblies which sprang from that movement, after vainly trying to do for the churches what

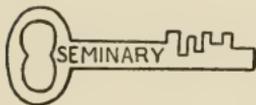
the churches ought to have been doing for themselves, have about lost the teacher-training key.

Along with the Chautauqua, as early as 1888, came the teacher-training work of the stronger inter-denominational Sunday-school associations, Illinois and Ohio leading the way ; and I shall later try to show how, under serious difficulties and with inadequate means, they have essayed to do for the church what the church was bound by its divine commission to do for itself. In the nature of the case, an inter-denominational agency can only supplement the denominational, and can never supplant or displace it. Inter-denominationalism is at best a servant, not a master. With its eye upon the entire field of the churches, it can gather what is best in all and serve the needs of each.

But its best service is done when it has reinforced and encouraged the denominations severally in doing, each for itself, its own proper work. It is the duty and right of each church to organize, maintain, and direct its own teacher-training. It owes this to its teachers, who serve it without pay and often without thanks. It owes it to the Sunday-school scholars that they shall have the best Bible training the church can supply. It owes it to the Bible itself as a book not easily handled by even the trained teacher, and often travestied by the untrained. The church can speak with authority to its own pastors and people, who will heed what it says if only for the sake of loyalty to it. Blood is thicker than water, and it is no reproach to inter-denominationalism to say that it can never command such loyalty as a worthy churchman will render

to his own denomination. If I see one thing plainer than another, it is that each church must take up its own burden of teacher-training, and by every honor it can confer and every authority it can rightfully exercise inspire its teachers to prepare themselves for their high vocation. It is a comfort to know that some of the churches are beginning to do this, and that the lost "church key," that opened doors for outsiders and left its own doors hard and fast, is being recovered and freed from rust.

THE SEMINARY KEY



It is a question whether church key or theological seminary key is the more effective. The church has the final word of authority, but the church, in these days, is largely what the seminaries make it. Let the seminary magnify a principle or method, and in a few years, among the laity, it will be reflected in a thousand pastoral fields. I have an easy and convincing illustration. A few years ago the Louisville Baptist Seminary had at its head a prince among preachers and scholars, Dr. John A. Broadus. He was a devoted friend of the Sunday-school and its teachers, and impressed his students with the value and dignity of Sunday-school work. Beginning with Sunday-school "practice work" in Louisville, and extending it throughout the entire South, the old "Broadus boys," and their worthy seminary successors, have become the aggressive organizers and teacher-trainers of a great and growing church. A "pastor's Sunday-school institute" has become the

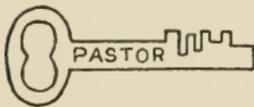
big annual event of the seminary calendar, and the Sunday-school idea is leavening the Baptist lump from Virginia to Texas.

Recently I was asked to contribute to a symposium upon "What can be done by our seminaries to advance our Sunday-school work?" My first plea was for a better Sunday-school "spirit" in the seminaries, an *esprit du corps* like that at Louisville. The "seminary key" has too much of the smell of "ology" and dogma about it, and too little of the scent of the living flowers that grow, or ought to grow, in the pastor's garden. The young men are too busy digging for Hebrew particles and Greek roots, and are not enough concerned for the plain people in the Sunday-school pews. So far as the writer knows, there is not a Sunday-school chair, or the pretense of it, in an American theological seminary, though professors abound for everything else, from Sanskrit to sociology. With (in round numbers) 150,000 American Sunday-schools, 1,500,000 officers and teachers, and 15,000,000 enrolled members, all depending for skilled leadership chiefly upon the output of our seminaries, it is a little singular that only four or five of these seminaries include a Sunday-school text-book in their curricula, a few more hold Sunday-school "lecture courses," not always by experts, and most of them depend largely upon a student practice-work in neighboring Sunday-schools, usually without official direction and revision.

Theology is good and necessary, but Sunday-school soul-winning and teacher-training are better. West Point drills its cadets thoroughly in science, mathe-

matics, and language, but does not stop with theory. The West Point graduate is nothing if not master of detail and trainer of others. From filling a cartridge to manœuvering an army corps he knows how to do things, and is never so happy as when transforming an awkward squad into well-disciplined soldiers. A young pastor just out from the seminary, who is not a type of the better class of our seminary men, said to me recently, upon urging him to conduct a training-class: "I haven't time,—if I had, I wouldn't know how. Let the superintendent train them—it's not my business." I can well believe it was of this man's seminary examination a Sunday-school wit remarked, "They asked ten questions about angels, and not one about the child." I beg pardon for insisting that it is the "business" of the ex-seminary pastor to train his Sunday-school workers, and of the seminary to cause him to "know how." My "seminary key" ought to be the most serviceable, but I am sorry to say it is the rustiest of the bunch.

THE PASTOR'S KEY



The pastor of a church has been defined as "the eye, the ear, and the last word." He ought to see and hear everything that makes for the welfare of his charge. His word ought to be, and usually is, the final word of authority. There is nothing more beautiful, and at times more pathetic, than the upturning of the hearts of the people toward their pastors. It is like the flowers that turn their faces toward the sun. Even the children give their brightest smile and word

to the pastor, and the stalwart men of the street instinctively pay him honor when he comes among them. In many years of Sunday-school work I have noted this singular respect for men of the cloth. I pray God it may never be less. It has been my constant habit, in every teacher-training endeavor, to lean heavily upon these men of God, whom he has called to be "overseers" of his church. I count a hearty word of advice and encouragement from a pastor to his Sunday-school workers as worth more than all my letters and speeches. Many times, when discouraged over attempts to start a teacher-training work, a touch of the pastor's hand, a word from his lips, has scattered indifference and secured success. I think I owe as much to this gracious pastoral word as any man living, and I have come to rely upon it when everything else fails.

I take my appeal to these men. If the church has failed to put into your hands a teacher-training plan, if the seminary failed to give you a Sunday-school training, your "pastor's key," brethren of the cloth, can open the door and solve the problem. By virtue of their work, your teachers are your under-pastors, and can help largely to make or unmake your ministry. How well or poorly they teach, it is for you chiefly to determine. No other man can do with or for them what you can do. The good shepherd "putteth forth his sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice, and a stranger will they not follow."

One of the earliest and tenderest recollections of my teacher-training work is of a gray-haired Presbyterian

pastor, a man of rare scholarship and of well-rounded pastoral efficiency, whose ministry of nearly fifty years had brought honor to himself and his church. I had tried to set forth the need and practicability of teacher-training, but met with seeming indifference. The old man took me to his home, called in his workers, took the points of my plea and made them his own, and with scarce an effort, in ways that only a loved pastor could use, organized a class, heading the roll with his own name. When I praised his good work, he said : "I get more out of it than I put into it. It renews my own youth, and will be about all I can leave behind."

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S KEY



I have asked many superintendents, "What is the one hardest thing you have to do?" And their uniform answer was "To get teachers." The question of "supply teachers" invariably comes to the front in Sunday-school conventions. I am not surprised that it does, and I have not found that the usual ready-made devices from the platform meet the difficulty. The cashier of a Southern bank, superintendent of a Presbyterian Sunday-school, confronted me recently with this old and vexed question. When I had put before him my stock alternatives of a "supply class" keeping a week ahead of the school in lesson preparation, or of pledged "emergency" volunteers, his countenance fell as he pronounced them a "snare and a makeshift." I heartily concurred, and my parting word was : "You will have to *grow* your own

crop of teachers. It is the one thing to do, and you are the one man to do it."

I tried to tell him how he could pick from his school the most hopeful subjects for teacher-training, put them under his most competent teacher in the regular session of the school, select for them a teacher-training course, taking the place, for the time being, of the International Lesson ; make much of them in honor, and pledge them in advance to the ministry of teaching when the course was completed. Any other way out of the difficulty is at best a "make-shift," and many superintendents are beginning to find it out.

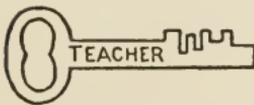
Whatever the pastor may or may not do, the problem of teacher-training, in its last analysis, is "next" to the superintendent. The failure of his teachers, or his failure to get more teachers, is his peculiar burden, and involves his own good name. The churches generally look to the superintendent to choose his teachers, and lay the direct blame of their failure upon him. Getting consent of somebody to teach a class is not his main difficulty. It is finding those who know what and how to teach.

The superintendent has found by hard experience that piety is one thing, and skill to teach is another. He needs a combination of both, and his trouble is largely on the educational side. His call to those already spiritually equipped is usually met by such protests as these : "I am not a teacher ;" "I do not know the Bible well enough ;" "I can't manage boys and girls ;" "If I knew how, I would be willing." I find no fault with these excuses. They

come from a conviction that Sunday-school teaching is a serious and delicate work, and that piety alone, without specific preparation for it, should disqualify the candidate.

No man is closer to his teachers than the faithful superintendent. No man, not even the pastor, should try to come between him and them, if the superintendent is doing his duty. No true superintendent is so wanting in influence over his helpers as to be unable to lead them into ways of improvement. I like the superintendent who magnifies his office and *leads* his school, and does not hand round his problems to be solved by others. Let him try the key of his great office upon this problem of teacher-training. His success will depend upon three things,—his pride, his pluck, his persistence; his pride in his standing as a superintendent, his pluck in striking out into new ways, his persistence in stubbornly holding to his purpose until success is achieved.

THE TEACHER'S KEY



I make much of my "teacher's key," and the key itself shows how well the teachers have begun to use it. It is like the old fable in Æsop of the lark and the wheat-field. As long as the farmer waited for his neighbors to cut his wheat, the little larks might make themselves at home. But when the farmer decided to do his own cutting, Mrs. Lark and family went visiting. I believe strongly all I have written about "church," "seminary," "pastor," and "superintendent's" key. But I studied

inertia in my school days, and learned that large bodies move slowly. Perhaps the new metal, radium, which they say is to revolutionize the old order of nature, may help to hurry them up. Meantime Farmer John would better cut his own wheat.

The teacher's key, in the teacher's own hand, is slow but sure. It would turn far more easily if the other keys were constantly in use, but without them it has proved its effectiveness in the hands of at least ten thousand American Sunday-school teachers.

At Cold Harbor, under General Lee, a brigade of us—raw recruits from the "brush country"—waited several hours for General or Colonel Somebody to come along on horseback and lead us into our first charge. Becoming a little excited by bursting shells and buzzing minie-balls, and ignorant of the conventionalities of such an occasion, we finally popped out from our hiding-place like so many jack rabbits, and made the charge on our own account. It was done with roughness and despatch, but it won the day.

Individually or collectively, with or without leaders or orders, the Sunday-school teachers who are really concerned about the matter should quit waiting and begin work for themselves. A self-trained teacher may lack a little in finish, but, like a home-made shoe or coat, wears well. If a company of teachers can come together and make a success of a teachers'-meeting, they have already learned to do as hard a work as maintaining a teacher-training class.

In a little city some years ago, I advised a small teachers'-meeting that wanted to broaden the scope

of its study, and make its sessions more profitable to read and discuss by chapters, for twenty minutes of each session, Dr. Trumbull's "Yale Lectures on the Sunday-School." The advice was taken, and with a single copy of the book in hand a course of teacher-training was begun, and continued through other books, with the result of revolutionizing the antiquated methods of the school, and making it one of the foremost in the state. It was a crude, homespun way of getting at it, but it won, and that is always the main point.

I remember, when a boy, chasing a bird through ten acres of meadow to put salt on its tail. I was advised by a kind friend that this was a sure method of bird-catching. I have not lost faith in the method,—for other boys. The trouble with me—or with the bird—was in not finding the "point of contact." I had not then read Mr. Du Bois's fine book on that subject.

My experience, however, leads me to counsel the teachers who may read these lines to quit chasing the bird in the meadow, and put salt on the bird in hand. It does not pertain to this chapter to show how this may be done. The question is first whether the teacher, if a way can be opened to him, has the faith and courage to attempt for himself, unaided, a work which he has been vainly waiting for others to aid him in doing. The "teacher's key" is both sign and test. It points the way, and it tests the nerve of the teacher.

WHAT IT SHOULD BE

III

WHAT IT SHOULD BE

FIRST, and chiefly, it should be the study of a course of teacher-training books. I am sometimes met at the outset by the objection that "training comes by experience, not by books." My answer is that a book itself may be the finest exposition of teaching experience. On my table lie two little books. In one is the clear-cut statement of teaching principles by one who worked his way from a district school to the presidency of a great state university; in the other is the broad common sense of one who is easily the Nestor of American Sunday-school teachers. The objection would sweep away all educational training, whether religious or secular. Books are mainly the working-tools of state normal college and common school. The young student in training for the state's license to teach, or the schoolboy trudging home with well-filled satchel, illustrates the training value of books. The Sunday-school teacher has no friend so near at hand and capable of serving his ambition as a well-chosen training-book.

I am met by another objector who cites the old maxim that "a little learning is a dangerous thing," and challenges any system of teacher-training as of necessity elementary, and therefore superficial. But elementary learning is not of necessity superficial. The multiplication-table and the correct spelling of

words are the simplest elements of learning, but they run through the entire gamut of scholarship. It is not so much the quantity as the quality of one's learning that gives it value. If teacher-training does no more than serve as a guide-post in pointing out the way to future effort, it will have done a noble service. Personally I can testify to the invaluable help I received from a little book which gave me my first real view of the Bible and my first impulse to its systematic study.

One other objection worth considering is the lack of expert leadership to organize and conduct teacher-training classes. "Training needs a trainer," they say. But trainers are being evolved out of the very processes of training. From a little company, without skilled leadership, faithfully studying together, one who has the training instinct will be developed. There is a natural and inevitable development of leadership for every new movement. When the steamboat was invented, the flatboatman became its pilot or captain. When the scythe was displaced by the reaper, the scytheman began to drive the reaper. With seven hundred training-classes and ten thousand students in my charge, nine out of ten are doing the required work under untrained leaders, who are learning to cross bridges as they come to them.

Summing up what a teacher-training course should be, I would say: It must largely be elementary, for the many to whom an advanced course is impossible. It should be flexible, allowing for advanced work for those who are capable. It should consist of a few choice books, small in compass, not

expensive, written by undisputed masters of both theory and practice. It should require honest study from the students, and not tempt them to pious fraud in a contest for its honors. It should have a definite objective, in the way of examinations, a diploma for those who have done conscientious work, and public recognition locally and generally, wherever both are practicable. It should be comprehensive, including in well-proportioned parts every department of learning in which a Sunday-school teacher needs to be trained.

What are these several parts? First, the Bible, as the one book the teacher must teach. Second, the scholar, who is to be taught and trained in the knowledge and use of this book. Third, the teacher and the art of teaching. Fourth, the school, in which the teaching and training are to be chiefly done. Last, the church, under whom and for whom should be all religious teaching and training.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR BIBLE?

I shall not indulge in platitudes about the Bible,—its divine origin, its infallible doctrines, its marvelous achievements. I can easily take these for granted. I am more concerned for the Bible as a text-book in the hands of an untrained teacher. The old illusion still widely holds, that any pious man or woman, Bible in hand, is competent to teach. A certain indefinable “*afflatus*,” the promise or proof of which I could never discern, is supposed to hover over the good man who teaches with pious motive and bungling method. I can find no warrant

in the Bible for this ancient illusion. David's prayer was, "Make me to understand the way of thy precepts ; so shall I talk of thy wondrous works." Paul's last plea was that Timothy might "rightly divide the word of truth." Perhaps no two men were more honored of God in the use of the Bible than Mr. Moody and Mr. Jacobs. Each said of the other, "He knows the Bible better than any man living." I happened to know something of the intense and methodic Bible study of these two men. Here and there God may have made use of sanctified ignorance, but it is his rule to honor men only as they "rightly divide" his Book.

I know I shall be met by some who will say that the Bible is a hard book, and that it can never be truly learned except in the languages in which it was written. If it be hard, it is a comfort to think of the innumerable lights converging upon it. As to its Hebrew and Greek originals, my English Bible is not to be despised. Every word of it has been threshed over and over by the scholars of many centuries, and I can even presume to face the man of Hebrew and Greek with my Revised Version and a standard commentary in hand. Indeed, I have been made to question at times, in the presence of pretentious and "liberal" scholarship, if the modicum of Hebrew and Greek behind it was not the "fly in the pot" of Bible ointment.

I am not a stickler for particular methods of Bible study. "One man's meat is another man's poison." I would rather know one well-defined principle underlying its sixty-six books than to become expert in

the use of a score of methods. The three qualities in Bible study which I exalt are : First, a spiritual grasp of the truth, which comes only through slow-wrought experience to those who "will do the will of God ;" the intellectual grasp, which comes only by hard study, as with any other book ; the educational grasp, which comes only of systematic study. The trouble with much of our Bible study is its aimlessness and lack of educational system. Here is the testimony of one of the foremost Bible students of the age : " It is a mistake to suppose for a moment that Bible study consists in the study of isolated texts, or in the study of single chapters, or even in the study of entire books. A man might study verses all his life, and know comparatively little about the Bible." It is the difference between knowing the world about us through microscope or telescope. When a boy, I was given the former, and reveled in wing of gnat and eye of fly. Later, I saw the heavens through the telescope, and entered at once into comradeship with the universe.

Let me test you as a Bible student by a few pertinent questions. Have you a purpose in your Bible study ? Or are you drifting from Sunday to Sunday over the few hurriedly scanned verses of your Sunday-school lesson ? Are you content with the opinions of others, or are you trying to find a way to the truth of the Bible for yourself ? Have you a plan of Bible study ? Can you call up from memory in order the salient events in the history of God's chosen people, through theocracy, kingdoms, and exile, thence onward through Christ and the apostles ? Can you call

the roll of Hebrew prophets, and assign to each his place and message? Can you give me a "character sketch" of Bible heroes and heroines? Can you pass a simple schoolboy examination upon the life and ministry of our Lord? Can you think your way through any book of the Bible, chapter by chapter, knowing that you know it? Can you tell me how the Bible came to us, or give me the story of your English Bible from Wycliffe's rude copy to the noble version from which you teach? If you say you are too busy to learn this, I can point you to thousands of young people who have done or are doing all this and more. But it was done under a *plan* of systematic study, from some such small book as Dunning's "Bible Studies,"—my little teacher-training "standby."

HOW TO KNOW YOUR SCHOLAR

It is an era of books and lectures on pedagogy, "child psychology," "paidology," which have a classical sound, and are much in evidence. I prefer to write about plain boys and girls. "If he means human natur," said a countryman at a convention, while a lecturer was unfolding his paidology from a chart, "I know something about that myself." In the multitude of child-counselors there is not scriptural assurance of safety. I sometimes turn away from these glib paidologists with the feeling I had when the phrenologists used to examine our craniums, and make charts of our future destiny—at a dollar per chart. Human nature in books and in boys is **not** always the same. The best book on child study I

know of is a little black Book, to which I refer all problems of religious psychology. Next to that book in my library is Froebel. I beg pardon for taking my paidology from the Bible, though I am glad, however, to pay tribute to much of the current study of the Sunday-school scholar, especially to such books as Miss Harrison's "Study of Child Nature," Du Bois's "Point of Contact," Trumbull's "Hints on Child Training," and Forbush's "Boy Problem." A fault, as I see it, in most of the recent books, is their exclusive concern for childhood. The foundation of all teaching and training is childhood, indeed, but I risk being held as a heretic in suggesting that the boys and girls of the intermediate, and the big boys and girls of the advanced department, are quite as deserving and needful of our concern. My neighbor is building a fine home, and his contractor took much pains over the foundation. But, as a wise master-builder, I notice that he is equally painstaking with the rising stories of brick. I would as soon have a faulty foundation as a leaky roof to my house, and it does not follow that because the foundation is secure the roof will not let in water. I am frank to say that I believe primary books and theories are a little overdone, and are obscuring problems quite as grave and imminent. Certainly the "adolescent period" folks and the primary folks, with their counter claims, need to get together.

As to the study of the scholar in his intellectual states and processes, I would like to have every teacher trained to know the laws of mind, and the order and relative value and use of the unfolding mental facul-

ties. But I doubt if the average teacher, who is usually a busy person, has time or need for systematic study of pure psychology. The applied psychology of such books as I have named will come nearer meeting his need and opportunity. Give me one who really loves boys and girls, whose affection leads him into intimate personal contact with them at all points, who has faith in the wisdom of his Bible to interpret human nature in all of its changing moods, whose chief concern is to save souls and form Christian character,—the best I can do for such a teacher is to commend to him one of the four books I have named, and leave professional pedagogy and paidology to take care of themselves.

THE WELL-ROUNDED TEACHER

There are few "born teachers." They are as rare as born artists or authors. Most of the successful teachers of the day were bunglers at beginning, but by study and practice have mounted step by step to success. Learning how to teach is not harder or more complex than learning to keep accounts, to bind books, to run a farm. It involves both science and art. The science of teaching gives one the principles by which teaching must be shaped. The art comes from patient application of these principles to the work of instruction. There are certain fundamental principles of teaching, few, simple, and unchanging. The great teachers of the past used them, and every successful teacher consciously or unconsciously employs them. Christ gave them his sanction. When a "certain lawyer" stood up, tempting him with

questions about his neighbor, and our Lord put the burden of answer back upon his questioner, he was enforcing what is now one of the "seven laws" in Gregory's little book: "Use the pupil's own mind, exciting his self-activity."

To learn thoroughly such a principle, then to make one's self master of it by practice, is far better than slavish copying of methods without understanding the reason for them. Ready resort to borrowed methods is the bane of much modern teaching. The mere copyist shifts from copy to copy, and, though some of his methods may happen to hit, is shooting arrows in the dark. Sunday-school conventions and institutes are a hindrance rather than a help to the teacher who takes home from them for use in his class a method the reason for which he does not understand. What the trained Sunday-school teacher needs is to be grounded in the unchanging laws of teaching, and from these to deduce his own methods, or wisely adapt the methods of others. Otherwise he is like one trying to pick out of piles of stone and brick and lumber the architect's plan of a building.

I cannot urge too strongly upon those who are ambitious to succeed as teachers the study of these "principia," or first things in teaching. They come only by study and from books. The old-world experience transmits them to the new, as a heritage from master-teachers like Socrates, Paul, Luther, and Arnold of Rugby. Gregory's "Seven Laws of Teaching," Trumbull's "Teaching and Teachers," Wells's "Sunday-school Success," are modern expressions of these principles, all the better for Sunday-school

teachers because they deal with the application of the principles rather than with the principles themselves.

The Sunday-school teacher needs training in other matters than the science and art of teaching. He needs to study the ever-broadening field of his work. He is more than instructor. He is student, teacher, trainer, officer, under-pastor, shepherd. He is the spiritual ally of the home, the recruiting officer of the church, the conscience-maker of the state. His work, for the first time in religious history, is being inquired into by university and college men, who seek to correlate it with their own. He is vidette and drill-master of the church. Over against him and his one hour on the Sabbath is set an array of evil forces—the neglectful Christian home, the godless home with positive evil training, the vices of the street and the evil companions who ensnare youth, the bad books and papers in easy reach. He must study ways of counteracting these evils. He will need to study the art of the trainer even more than the art of the teacher. Training is more difficult than teaching. It is putting into practice what is taught. It is the difference between planting the seed and caring for the plant until it comes to maturity. Teaching gives knowledge; training makes character. And the teacher's abiding work is along the lines of training.

But above his teaching and training, as his supreme mission, the teacher needs to study the art of soul-winning. It is a divine art, and its processes are nowhere so plainly set forth as in the teacher's Bible. The lesson that is made plain to the mind, but does not find its way to the heart, is a failure. The teacher

who has no conversions in his class is an anomaly. To save his scholars is his one great duty, and his position gives him opportunity beyond that of even pastor or parent. Any teacher-training system that does not include and exalt this soul-winning art is unworthy its name.

THE MODERN SCHOOL

Place a tallow candle at one end of a room and an Edison electric lamp at the other, and you have by contrast the school of Raikes and the modern Sunday-school. Learning to spell and read have given place to graded teaching and graded lessons. The unclassified room of Gloucester gamins is transformed into the model Sunday-school building, with departments and class-rooms. The four women, at a shilling a Sabbath, have grown into millions of picked men and women, the "cream of the church," as Mr. Jacobs was fond of saying. Raikes' place as a superintendent is held by Wanamaker, Pepper, and Lawrance. What was a "mission school" has become the chief dependency of the church for growth and power.

It is in the light of such progress, and under such increasing pressure, that the Sunday-school teacher must do his work. He is not a mere spectator. He is a vital part of the complex machine,—cylinder, shaft, balance-wheel, or safety-valve. The school's frictionless movement depends upon him, and he in turn depends upon the school. He must know his place and keep it, or become the "hot box" of hindrance to life and motion. I have known a single teacher and class to obstruct the entire machinery

of a Sunday-school. The teacher, by virtue of his office, is an officer of the school. He is an assistant superintendent, though not known by that title. The school is his workshop and drill-ground. His own class is but one of the successive stages through which his scholars must pass.

He ought therefore to know what precedes and follows him. He should study the various departments, their management and methods. He should know the ins and the outs of every approved modern method. He should study the art of managing a school from the standpoint of the superintendent, which differs only in measure from his own management of a class. He should learn how to keep the school's records and finances, and run its library and Home Department. He should study the music, the literature, the program. Especially he should be a student of the history of the Sunday-school movement, from its crude Old Testament beginnings to its splendid modern development. He need not lack for training-books that will give him this bird's-eye view of the modern Sunday-school. From a score or more of recent textbooks it would be hard to say which is best, but if my choice were restricted to one book I would take Axtell's "Organized Sunday-school," or McKinney's "Bible School," or Vincent's "Modern Sunday-school," or Schauffler's "Ways of Working."

LOYALTY TO CHURCH

I do not place the church last in the elements of a teacher-training course because it is greatest or least. Logically it comes last, as all our Sunday-school ser-

vice should be to exalt and magnify the church as the one divine institution in the earth. I cannot sympathize with or understand a system of teacher-training that does not begin and end in the church. Nor can I esteem one fully equipped to teach and train the children of the church who is himself untaught and untrained in its noble history and doctrine. I would as soon think of training the public-school boy for citizenship in our republic without a knowledge of the country to which he belongs, and of the men who purchased our liberties by their blood. One day in Chicago I saw a crowd of boys silently gazing into a shop window, oblivious to all sights and scenes of a great city. I followed their reverent look, and I saw what had fixed their eager eyes. It was a small, tattered, and powder-blackened flag, and beneath it was the legend, "This flag was in the battle of Bunker Hill." There is a love of church that is deeper than love of country, and I would have every teacher to know and feel it, and to inspire it in his Sunday-school class.

I have no love for that mawkish sentiment that any church is good enough, and that "it makes no difference to what church one belongs." I have found that the men and women who counted for something in faithful, self-denying work, were those in whom denominational love and loyalty were deep rooted. Although a paradox on its face, I have also found that the rock-ribbed denominationalist was oftenest the most catholic and helpful in any Christian fellowship or work. I am sure that every trained teacher will be a better and stronger teacher if he adds to his

training equipment a knowledge first of the general church of Christ in all lands and ages, and then builds upon this a fuller knowledge of his own denomination. I call to mind Hurst's "Outlines of Church History," a small book, fairly and accurately written, which will serve as a book of study of the general church. The denominational history, each denomination will provide for its own. I beg pardon for a personal reference. I was born into a family that has been Methodist for six generations, my father a Methodist preacher. There is nothing I love so much in all the world as the church of my fathers. Yet I have never been accused of narrowness or bigotry. When I am in trouble, and things seem to go hard against me, it is my custom to take down the life of Wesley or Asbury, or some story of the men who suffered and died for my Methodism, and in their heroic presence I come to myself again.

WAYS OF DOING IT

IV

WAYS OF DOING IT

SUGGESTIVE TRAINING-COURSES

AN ELEMENTARY COURSE.

TIME.—One to two years.

TERM.—October to June,—eight months each year.

MEMBERSHIP.—Sunday-school officers, teachers, and chosen young people.

REQUIREMENTS.—A written pledge to attend the meetings and to study and complete the course.

MEETINGS.—Weekly, at an hour apart, or in connection with the teachers'-meeting.

PLAN OF STUDY.—The leader or a committee apportions in advance the subject-matter of the course, in weekly sections, for home study by members.

THE WEEKLY PROGRAM.—The hour used chiefly in review and drill upon the week's section, as previously assigned.

LEADER.—The best man or woman available, to direct, but not always to teach, the class.

EXAMINATIONS.—As prescribed by the course selected, or as prepared and conducted by the leader upon completion of a book, together with frequent additional oral reviews.

GRADUATION.—A special public church service, with address and presentation of diplomas.

COURSE OF STUDY.—(Any books mentioned in these chapters can be obtained of The Sunday School Times Co., Philadelphia.) Your own church course, if it has one; if not, then any one of the following training-courses: Pease's "Normal Course" (first and second series. 50 cents each);

“Assembly Normal Union” (two books. 50 cents); Hurlbut’s “Revised Normal Lessons” (40 and 25 cents); Semelroth’s “Complete Manual” (50 and 25 cents); “Legion of Honor” (first and second series. 25 cents); Spilman’s “Normal Studies” (25 cents).

AN ADVANCED COURSE.

TIME.—Two years, as a minimum.

TERM, MEMBERSHIP, ETC.—As with elementary course above.

COURSE OF STUDY.—Your own church course, if it has one; if not, a course composed of five books,—one book each upon the five subjects following:

THE BIBLE.—Dunning’s “Bible Studies” (40 and 25 cents); or, Sell’s “Bible Study by Periods” (60 and 35 cents); or, “The Bible and its Books” (50 cents).

THE SCHOLAR.—Miss Harrison’s “Study of Child Nature” (\$1); or, Du Bois’s “The Point of Contact in Teaching” (75 cents); or, Schauffler’s “The Teacher, the Child, and the Book” (\$1); or, Wells’s “Sunday-school Success” (\$1.25); or, Trumbull’s “Hints on Child-Training” (\$1.25); or, Forbush’s “Boy Problem” (75 cents).

THE TEACHER.—Gregory’s “Seven Laws of Teaching” (50 cents, net); or, Trumbull’s “Teaching and Teachers” (\$1.25); or, Hamill’s “The Sunday-school Teacher” (50 cents).

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.—Schauffler’s “Ways of Working” (\$1); Vincent’s “Modern Sunday-school” (90 cents); Axtell’s “The Organized Sunday-school” (50 cents); McKinney’s “Bible School” (50 cents); Foster’s “Sunday-school Manual” (75 cents); Boynton’s “Model Sunday-school” (50 and 30 cents).

THE CHURCH.—Hurst’s “Outlines of Church History” (40 cents), followed by brief history of your own denomination.

SPECIAL PASTOR'S COURSE.

Hatcher's "The Pastor and the Sunday-school" (75 cents); Chapman's "Spiritual Life of the Sunday-school" (35 cents); Axtell's "Organized Sunday-school" (50 cents); Trumbull's "Teachers'-Meetings" (30 cents); Gregory's "Seven Laws of Teaching" (50 cents, net).

CONDUCTING A TRAINING-CLASS

The touch of elbows in any good work is always stimulating and helpful. Wherever it is possible, therefore, to form a class, the work will be better and surer. The choice of an elementary or an advanced course, as outlined suggestively above, will depend upon local conditions. The mistake is often made of setting too severe a standard at beginning. Many who turn away from an advanced training-course will return to it after successfully completing an elementary course. A desire for the more thorough study is begotten by the easier work. Especially is this true of the young people who are willing to be put in training. The pressure of time, the cost of books, the lack of the study habit, the small ambition of many of these, need to be considered. The elementary course is not child's play. In any one of the elementary courses I have named a good foundation is laid in the subjects which should constitute a teacher-training course. For my own part, I would advise any teacher, or one who wishes to become a teacher, to take the severer course. Its five or more books, patiently studied and assimilated in two years' time, will assure success as a Sunday-school teacher to the ambitious student, though of moderate ability.

Several points need to be carefully guarded in the organization of a training-class. Much depends upon the spirit and purpose of those who compose it. Hence I have suggested a written pledge to attend the meetings of the class, and to study and complete the course. I would admit none who would not subscribe to this pledge. After the novelty and enthusiasm of the first study and meetings have passed, as they inevitably will, I should need the reinforcement this pledge would bring. Better a little handful who "mean business," than a multitude of mere enthusiasts.

SECRETS OF GOOD LEADERSHIP

More than this is the choice of a leader, upon whom, in most cases, the final success or failure of the class will depend. A training expert is not always the best leader. Successful leadership, I have found, is a matter of personal rather than educational qualification. The leader who has common sense, sympathy with others, watchfulness to encourage the weak and laggard student, and an unflinching purpose to hold his class together to the end, may know little about training-books, but is the kind of leader who will succeed. Much, too, depends upon the regular weekly meeting of the class, and the wise apportionment of the subject-matter of the course of study.

In the beginning, the order in which the books are to be studied, and the time to be given to each book, and the further division of each book into weekly study sections, should be carefully planned and explained. Nothing should be allowed to change or cancel the regular meetings of the class. Either the

one expert leader should conduct the weekly session, or, if no one is more expert than the others, the members in turn may lead. As the one purpose of the weekly meeting is to review the week's study, and to test what has been learned, however clumsily this may be done, any member of the class is competent to do it. A review of the salient points only of the subject-matter studied, followed by a spirited drill upon these points, as written upon the blackboard and recited over and over by the class, is a simple yet effective method of class leadership.

As this method proceeds, the value of class study will be shown in the sifting of the subject-matter, and the determination of what is or is not important. From time to time the class should be tested by carefully prepared oral reviews, based upon questions ranging through the book in hand, and including its salient matter only. I recall one class whose members thoroughly mastered their course of study by the use of this very simple catechetical method. Their weekly meeting was nothing more than the old-fashioned "cross-questioning," back and forth, first by one, then by all. Again I urgently insist, as enforced by the experience of many years in training-work, that it is not upon expert leadership or method the average training-class must depend. If these are at hand, use them and be thankful. But there is a something which I cannot define, yet have often seen and admired,—a rugged sort of independence and purpose, in the home-grown, necessity-evolved leader and method, which somehow eclipses the finest work of the professional trainer,

I once asked the secret of such a leader's success. He was a hard-working Western farmer, who had a wonderful "knack" of holding together and getting the best out of his country training-classes. "Oh! he's just one of us,—he knows us, and we know him," was the reply I received. I have found no finer qualification for local training leadership than that country phrase,—“Just one of us.”

TESTING A TRAINING-CLASS

There is an old maxim about the "proof of the pudding," etc. I confess that I have little respect for so-called "reading courses" for Sunday-school teachers, at the end of which there is nothing to test thoroughly the work that has been done. A training-course without a thorough and comprehensive written examination to enforce this test is like a kite without a tail. It may be a good kite, but it will not fly. I never encourage a mere "reading" course. I have found by disappointing experience how carelessly and superficially such reading is often done. I exact downright honest study instead as the only road to success, whether in secular or religious learning. There ought to be nothing of the patent medicine, "quick-cure" method in our training work. For years I put at the head of all training-books and leaflets the admonition, "Do not play at normal work." Anything less than hard study and mastery of the text is a snare to the student, and has deservedly incurred the sharp censure of those secular educators who have a sincere concern for Sunday-school teaching. There is already too much of the knowl-

edge that puffeth up. I think one reason for the indifference towards teacher-training on the part of some of our brighter pastors is their just aversion for training schemes that make a teacher of you "while you wait." Any reader of these lines who wants to become a Sunday-school teacher in fact as well as in name, but is unwilling to pay the price of hard study as tested by a thorough examination, will find nothing farther of interest in these chapters.

It was a saying of Lord Bacon that "reading maketh a full man, conversation maketh the ready man, but writing maketh the exact man." Upon the completion of each book of study, the leader of the class, or his pastor or superintendent in his stead, should conduct, in writing, an examination sufficiently comprehensive and severe as to test fully and fairly the quality of the work done by members of the class. Several hours should be given to it, and every allowance made for clumsiness and faultiness of papers, and every encouragement shown to any who scare at the ghost of an examination. But I insist that in these written papers will be found the final and fair test of whether the student put mind and heart into his work. Let him understand that he must earn what he gets, if he is to be trained to respect himself and his work as a teacher. I have not found that this standard of hard study and thorough testing repels. Wherever it does, repulsion is better than attraction, and sifts the wheat from the tares. Along with every batch of examination questions I have been sending out to training-classes, I have tried to

guard the integrity of the examination by some such requirements as the following :

1. These questions are mailed to you directly as leader, or as pastor or superintendent of an individual student.
2. Please see that the questions are withheld until the hour for examination, and that the examination is fairly conducted, under your immediate supervision and at one sitting. The time, place, length of time given, and all other details, are left to your own discretion.
3. Call all members together ; read these instructions ; urge each to take the examination at the one time and place fixed, as the questions are not severe, and the standard for diploma fair and reasonable. Every examinee, upon completing his examination, should certify in writing that "the examination has been taken upon honor." Please see that this statement accompanies each set of papers sent.

GRADUATING A TRAINING-CLASS

As I have urged a written examination as a final test of study, so I urge the public recognition of those who have proved faithful students. If the test of study discloses conscientiousness and thoroughness of work by the student, he should be accounted worthy of every honor, local or general, that can be conferred. While the training diploma is not the end in view, it should signalize the end of the training-course. It is the concrete objective, and will do much to hold the class together and assure a better quality of study. It gives dignity to the training work, and calls public attention to its importance. I do not count it a weakness in men or women to covet the honors they have fairly won. The desire for honorable recognition is a

weakness to which most of us are liable—if it is a weakness. The Bible allows for it. Paul and Peter, and other apostles and good men, were not above it. Our Lord, as he tells us in one of his parables, holds in reserve a word of public recognition that I trust all of us at the last may hear, each for himself: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

I have had the privilege thus far of signing more than five thousand training diplomas, and of presenting very many of them in person to the hard-working Sunday-school people who had earned them. In the West and South, and in Canada especially, this closing service of public recognition has proved a strong and needed stimulus to the work. In Illinois, year after year, the one great hour of the annual Sunday-school Convention is that devoted to honoring its host of teacher-training graduates. No expense is spared, no device is unused, and the great audience is always at its greatest and best when that hour occurs. In my present field I am setting the graduates of my church in the finest place of honor I can contrive upon the platform of Annual Conferences, before the chief dignitaries of the church, and am putting their names upon the “Roll of Honor” in all its Sunday-school literature.

Most, if not all, of the training-courses I have named in this chapter provide diplomas for their graduates,—the Assembly Normal Union, the Pease, the Semelroth, the Hurlbut, the Legion of Honor, and others. Several of the churches have their own training-courses and diplomas, which every loyal churchman should first consider. More than a score of the inter-

denominational, state, and provincial Sunday-school associations award their own diplomas to graduates of association courses. Diplomas, general in form and adaptable to local conditions, may also be procured.

At its Winona, Indiana, meeting, in August, 1903, the Executive Committee of the International Sunday-School Convention appointed a "Committee on Education," composed of seven college and Sunday-school men, who were instructed to formulate "standards and rules governing the issuance of an International Sunday-school teachers' diploma," for use throughout the entire continent. Of the seven men of the committee it is worth noting, as a sign of the advance of teacher-training in the church, that three of its members are President W. O. Thompson, of the Ohio State University; President E. Y. Mullins, D. D., of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Dr. S. F. Upham, of Drew Theological Seminary. In the next chapter the reader will find a brief statement of what this committee has already done.

Whatever the diploma that marks the end of the course, it should be awarded with every accessory of honor. In the local church chosen by the class, on Sunday evening preferably, as a special service, the graduation of the class should be observed. The pastor or pastors of the graduates should "lay themselves out" to make it an occasion of peculiar interest and profit. It should be thoroughly advertised in every paper and home in the community. The fairest flowers and the brightest music should enhance it. The graduates, the elect pastors and superintendents, and the officers of the church, should occupy the

place of honor upon the platform. The finest address that some pastor or speaker of ability can deliver should be the feature of the evening. The award of diplomas should be made as impressive as possible, and the occasion generally should prove an impetus to local Sunday-school work. I am not dealing with the theoretical. I know what these occasions may do. I have had the honor to take part in more than a hundred of them within the last ten years. May their number and their influence for untold good increase!

Here is a souvenir program of such a graduating service. The paper is growing yellow, and the lines are fading out, but I specially cherish it as a token of the first service in which I presented diplomas to a teacher-training class. Behind the fading names a host of tender memories arise of the faithful leader and class of that Southern Illinois town :

LEGION OF HONOR GRADUATING EXERCISES
METHODIST CHURCH, CARMi, ILLINOIS, JANUARY 15, 1891

PROGRAM

DUET : "The Light of the World," Mrs. A. A. Lehman
and M. W. Spencer.

BIBLE READING : Thomas Parkhurst.

SONG : "Coronation," congregation.

PRAYER : Rev. J. G. Dee.

THEME : The Bible.

A BOOK FOR EVERY ONE : Miss Florence Emerson

DUET : "Lamp of Life," Miss Annie Tate and W. J.
Blackard.

ITS LITERATURE : Miss Mae E. Dunlevy.

ITS TEACHINGS : D. L. Boyd.

SONG : "Wonderful Words," by normal class.

ITS AUTHENTICITY : Miss Ina Anderson.

ITS INSPIRATION : Mrs. Ira Reeves.

SONG : "Walk in the Light," by normal class.

ADDRESS : Rev. H. M. Hamill, followed by award of diplomas to class of twenty graduates.

SONG : "Here am I, send me," congregation.

DOXOLOGY AND BENEDICTION.

A HOME-GROWN VETERAN TRAINER

Mr. George P. Perry is a successful druggist of Sterling, Illinois, and a Baptist in good standing. He is of the "home-grown" variety, with a pronounced Western flavor. There proved to be much more in him than his friends or myself had discovered. Never a college or seminary man, he invented a unique and most helpful objective study of the "Life of Christ," which has gone round the world. For many years, though yet a young man, this veteran organizer and conductor of training-classes has been modestly making fame for his little city. There is nothing phenomenal about the man or his methods. He has those three homespun qualities of the American proverb,—"grace, grit, gumption." He is a fair illustration of the possibilities in thousands of men and women, who could match his achievements if they would. I wrote asking him to summarize his teacher-training work. I have his modest reply, from which I extract the more pertinent facts.

STERLING, ILL., October 19, 1903.

DEAR DR. HAMILL :—

I began my teacher-training work here in 1885. For months before I conducted a campaign of agitation on the subject in township conventions and by personal contact.

Since that time no year has passed without systematic teacher-training. My classes have almost always been composed of members from various denominations. My method of conducting the class is to assign a lesson in advance for study, then, by question and blackboard and illustration, teach it as best I can. I have never organized a class but it finished the course of lessons. I have used a number of series of teacher-training courses,—the "Assembly Normal Union," Dunning's "Bible Studies," Hurlbut's "Normal Outlines," the "Legion of Honor," etc. I can go into nearly any school in the city and pick out my pupils as part of the school's teaching force, many of whom have assured me of great good derived from the course they studied. Usually I begin my classes in October, and continue through April, the number of meetings ranging from twenty to twenty-eight. I am now conducting my eighteenth and nineteenth classes. My total enrolment of students to date is five hundred and twenty-seven, average attendance two hundred and ninety-five, and the number completing a course by written examination and receiving diplomas is one hundred and sixty-one (including the probable graduates of my present classes).

Sincerely,

GEORGE P. PERRY.

I shall not paint the lily nor adorn the rose by comment upon that letter.

TEACHER-TRAINING AGENCIES

TEACHER-TRAINING AGENCIES

BY THE TEACHERS' - MEETING

I AM mindful of my promise. It was to the effect that a variety of ways would be suggested, by some one of which any teacher might secure the training desired. I know nothing better to begin with than the teachers'-meeting. Wherever and whatever the Sunday-school, the teachers'-meeting is indispensable. It stands first in any catalog of teacher-training agencies, because the weekly lesson must be studied, and the one place for its most effective study is in this meeting of teachers. I might go farther, and say that, when a school holds regularly and faithfully its meeting of teachers, it has already taken a long step in the direction of teacher-training.

But it needs to take another step. It should add to its weekly lesson study a course of specific teacher-training. To do this would double its interest and usefulness, and would do away with the popular excuse that busy teachers have not the time for both teachers'-meeting and training-class. Let the two be made into one, as both are closely related and interdependent. One cannot study the lesson with others without getting a measure of training, nor can one study a training-course without learning how better to study and teach the lesson. I can see how teacher-training work might become at once a feature of

thousands of Sunday-schools, if pastors and superintendents would readjust their teachers'-meetings to the double end of lesson study and teacher-training. Let any one of the approved elementary training-courses be selected, if there is no prescribed denominational course ; or, from the list of training books given in these articles let a special course be chosen, and for a year of pledged attendance and study let the following weekly program be enacted :

Teachers'-Meeting Program

Time : Eighty minutes.

Place : The cosiest church room.

Leader : The superintendent or pastor, or both.

Members : The officers and teachers and young people of the "teacher-supply class."

Meetings : Monday evening.

Pledge : To attend and study both lesson- and training-course for one year.

Program : Ten minutes' prayer-meeting ; ten minutes as a council upon the school ; thirty minutes' lesson study ; thirty minutes training-study.

THE TEACHERS' CLASS

I have suggested the use of the teachers' -meeting in a training way as an easy initiative. From the best estimates at hand, about one-fourth of our Sunday-schools already conduct these weekly meetings of their teachers, and have therefore a convenient time, place, and opportunity for beginning a teacher-training work. But I urge it as a compromise at best. There are many Sunday-schools whose officers and teachers are willing and ready for independent and

specific teacher-training. To these the teachers'-meeting, if one is held, is a place for lesson study only. Their desire is for a distinct course of teacher-training, apart from all other meetings, after a plan and under a leader of their own, with the one set purpose of becoming trained teachers. I sincerely sympathize with this desire for independent study. The end to be attained is worth the additional effort, and even the teachers'-meeting is subordinate to the training-class. Both are practicable in the same school, the membership of both being substantially the same. It is simply a question whether the teacher, in addition to the hour given weekly to the teachers'-meeting, is willing to add an hour each week for the study of a training-course. With such direct and exclusive purpose in view, it is easy to frame a program for training-work :

The Teachers' Training-Class

Members : The teachers, officers, and pastor.

Time : Any convenient hour each week.

Place : The pastor's study or church parlor.

Leader : Elected by class or appointed by superintendent and pastor.

Course of study : Denominational or selected,—two years.

Condition : Pledged members only.

Program : Review of previous study, led by members alternately, fifteen minutes ; blackboard drill upon main points of the week's study, by class leader, thirty minutes ; discussion by class, fifteen minutes.

I have at hand the report of such a class. It comes from the Bethel Sunday-school of old Charleston. "*Dux femina acti*,"—which is Virgil's way of saying

that a woman was the moving spirit in it. It is one of the teachers' classes in my charge of which I am especially proud, and I shall not, therefore, introduce it apologetically. I wrote to the leader, asking a matter-of-fact statement of the ups and downs of the class, that I might use it, if desired, in print. Here is the reply :

CHARLESTON, S. C., OCTOBER 16, 1903.

Dear Sir:

I disclaim credit for the success of our training "Circle No. 369." Our pastor, the Rev. E. O. Watson, has been virtually our leader in conducting the meetings of the Circle. He first called the notice of the teachers to the formation of the teacher-training department of our church. He explained its organization and purpose, and called for the names of those who would enter upon the work. Thirteen responded. I was elected leader. From the roll of the teachers of the school, by personal appeal, I added five more members. We had our difficulties. Some were skeptical as to this new movement ; some were elderly people who had not kept in touch with the educational progress of our day ; some were unaccustomed to study ; and others, after beginning, were inclined to drop out. We had extremes as to age, and I was embarrassed by the fact that the older teachers had known me from infancy, and one had been my teacher. As to how these and other difficulties were met and overcome, I can put it in a single sentence,—by persistently and patiently keeping at it. At our meetings I would carefully watch the various members, then would privately manage to give to the discouraged a word of cheer. With those who seemed indifferent I would enthusiastically enlarge upon the great opportunity our church was affording us for preparation in the great work we had undertaken as teachers. I used all the tact I had, and kept at it at every opportunity. I would tell them how I had studied the course, what notes I had taken, and how I tested my work. I began with eighteen members. Fifteen will receive the full-course diploma of our church, and the remaining members are

yet at work on the first-year course. I lost one member only, —by removal. Most of our members are self-supporting, and find it therefore difficult to meet at night, as we were compelled to do. I was much encouraged by the enthusiasm of some of our members, by the timely encouragement and notice of us given in our Teachers' Magazine, and by the fact that the pastor, who is a born leader, used our "Bible studies" as the basis of his prayer-meeting talks. All our work was free, hearty, informal, and conversational. What I did was with the individual members, privately encouraging and persuading them. I believed in the movement with all my heart, and tried to present it to the others as I saw it.

(MISS) MARY E. HAMLIN.

THE CLASS IN THE SCHOOL

If I have a training "hobby," it is this,—a class of picked young people in every Sunday-school in training to teach. All else, in its last analysis, is a mere make-shift in solving the vital problem of teacher-training as it now confronts the church. The utilization of the teachers'-meeting is good if there is nothing else at hand; the formation of a distinct and independent teachers' training-class is better; but the class of young people in the Sunday-school under training to become the future teachers of the school is by all tokens the very best. It is the one way to "grow a crop of teachers." Teachers'-meetings come and go, and ebb and flow. Teachers'-classes at best mend existing methods of teaching. The class in the school strikes at the root of the church's need. All other methods are reformatory; this is essentially formative. My old friend in Illinois, Dr. C. C. Miller, used to cut across my oft-repeated pleas for temporary training expedients with the curt ques-

tion, "Why don't you aim directly at the bull's-eye? You are not hitting it with these devices." I knew my critic was right, though I was doing the best I could under adverse conditions. I must go the same round of devices and expedients now, but I realize more than ever that the one sure and satisfactory solution of teacher-training is for every church to put into its every Sunday-school in patient training a class of young people who shall be made ready to teach.

I wish I could impart some of the unbounded confidence I have in this method to the pastors and superintendents who may care to read these lines. Already I am finding that it is the one solvent of most of the difficulties in my way as a trainer of teachers. There is an enthusiasm, a docility, often a holy zeal, in youth, that compensates for all other defects. My mail brings me frequently nowadays the cheering intelligence that, while little could be done here and there to arouse the teachers, a company of ambitious young souls have banded together in the Sunday-school hour, and have begun the study of my church's training course. A chairman of a state board of public-school examiners saw his opportunity, got together some young people in his Sunday-school, and is my latest correspondent and comforter. In a Sunday or two I am to visit, on invitation, a big school of several hundreds in which the teacher-training work has dragged heavily among its fifty or more teachers; and the purpose of my visit is to set in motion a training-class of twenty picked young women who are eager to enter upon their two years' course. Years ago I got my first inspiration along this line from a Western

college president, now grown famous, and his superintendent, now governor of a great state, who jointly entered upon the experiment of growing their own crop of Sunday-school teachers from the devoted young people of the school. I wish I had time and space to tell how they did it, and how much life and vim it finally put into their school. Their "gallery training-class," with outlines on manilla paper and rapid-fire drills, and the pride of its graduates as they came to the end of a long hard course, before a great congregation, is a memory that stirs my heart. Here is a suggestive program for such a class :

Young People's Training-Class

Time : The regular Sunday-school hour.

Place : A separate room, the "gallery," or a convenient corner.

Membership : Any number of picked young people who "mean business."

Pledge : To study and complete the course, and then to serve as teachers.

Leader : The best available. The pastor, if he must teach.

Training-Course : Either elementary or advanced. To take the place of the regular lesson study. A two years' course, with graduation and diploma.

THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

I come back at the last to the individual student. Until the various denominations erect severally their training-courses, or the interdenominational associations include all candidates for teaching in their training-classes, the individual student must have a way provided specially for him. Even after all church and general training agencies are in operation there

will be many who have not access to training-classes, or who prefer to do their training-study individually. Heretofore the individual student has been at a disadvantage. From the many training-courses and books issuing from the publishers he knew not which to choose. Apart from the few distinct church or associated courses there was no official stamp of recognition or authority upon them. The teacher-training movement generally has been crude and chaotic, and needed classification and unification, to the end that one who was seeking a way to self-training as a Sunday-school teacher might have competent leadership and counsel in finding his way.

Precisely what was needed has been done. In the fall of 1903 the Executive Committee of the International Sunday-School Convention, recognizing the fast-increasing demands of a great field for guidance along the lines of teacher-training, appointed a "Committee on Education," clothed with plenary power to help in the solution of all training problems. In the city of Louisville, December 16 and 17, 1903, the committee held its first session, and has issued its first address, which deals chiefly, if not exclusively, with the problem of teacher-training. It has "cleared off the brush," not only for the individual student, but for very many training-classes. As its thoroughly efficient helper in the field, its plans will be carried out by Mr. W. C. Pearce, of Chicago, as "International Secretary of Teacher-Training." Mr. Pearce received his training in Illinois, the *avant-courier* among great associations in teacher-training. He afterwards accomplished a great training work in

the city of Chicago as its Sunday-school secretary. It will be his duty and pleasure to assist all who desire assistance in opening up a way towards teacher-training.

The Committee on Education has already done its work of classification and unification, as its initial report will show. It has given "recognition" to the elementary training-courses now in use. It is fixing the standards for an advanced training-course. It is preparing to issue, through the secretary of teacher-training, its elementary and advanced diplomas to all teacher-training classes and students who meet the requirements of the several recognized courses of study and the standards of the Committee. It will ask and urge all publishers of teachers' periodical helps to erect a teacher-training department for explaining, encouraging, and instituting teacher-training agencies throughout the field, denominationally and interdenominationally. Let the individual student, and all others concerned as to teacher-training, read the action of the Committee as contained in its official paper now before the public, and he will see that a long step has been taken towards solving the problem of Sunday-school teacher-training.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL AND
DENOMINATIONAL WORK

VI

INTERDENOMINATIONAL AND DENOMINATIONAL WORK

THE CHAUTAUQUA IDEA

ON A Tuesday evening, August 4, 1874, at Chautauqua Lake campground, New York, the first Chautauqua Assembly was convened, with John H. Vincent as Superintendent of Instruction. It was exclusively a "Sunday-school institute protracted to the length of two weeks." It was a great occasion and a great opportunity. Twenty-five states and all leading Protestant denominations were represented. But this was its one year of exclusive teacher-training. The original idea was expanded to include all forms of instruction, secular and religious.

The first Chautauqua, although it long ago removed its ancient landmarks and has become the Chautauqua University, in its earlier years was the pioneer in teacher-training, and its "Normal Union" blazed the way for other movements, denominational and interdenominational. A few of the hundred or more American Chautauquas continue to hold in honor the old idea of helping the Sunday-school teacher, notably among these the mother Chautauqua in the East, and the Winona Assembly in the West; but with most of them it is within bounds to say that teacher-training is a mere incident, and that the ratio of their expenditure for popular entertainment to their expen-

diture for teacher-training is a hundred dollars to one. The change has not come from lack of appreciation or patronage of Sunday-school workers, but chiefly from considerations of a commercial nature. Popular entertainment is a better dividend payer, and teacher-training, so far as related to the average present-day Chautauqua, is practically a lost opportunity.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION IDEA

Within fifteen years the teacher-training movement largely passed from the Chautauqua to the interdenominational Sunday-school Association. An incident to the former, it is now the chief concern of the latter, as it is changing from formative to educational conditions. To these associations is largely due the credit of the present widespread revival of interest in teacher-training. What the Chautauquas failed to do these are doing in all parts of the great International Sunday-school field. Of the fifty or more associations of the United States and Canada—state, provincial, and territorial—most of them have instituted teacher-training departments and courses of study. The number of their enrolled students runs up into tens of thousands, and their graduates are to be counted by the thousands. One state has an "Alumni Association" of more than three thousand graduates. By a few of these associations training specialists have been employed, and departments thoroughly and systematically maintained. In all of them, so far, the courses of study operated are substantially elementary, and the standards of study and recognition are generally lax.

Yet despite the chaotic conditions under which the work has largely been done, together with faulty methods and incapable leadership, a great and widespread teacher-training work has been quietly done. Noting this fact, and yielding to the insistent appeals of Sunday-school leaders for a more clearly defined and unified system of teacher-training, a "Committee on Education" and an International secretary of teacher-training were appointed in 1903 by the Executive Committee of the International Sunday-school Convention, to whom the matter of teacher-training was specially committed. At the first session of the committee, held at Louisville, Kentucky, December 16 and 17, 1903, the entire field of teacher-training was reviewed and considered; reports from Secretary Pearce were received; a uniform standard for elementary study and graduation was erected, and an elementary International diploma provided for future graduates; a committee was appointed to fix the standards for an advanced course of study and diploma, and a list of associations now doing satisfactory elementary work was formally approved. This list of associations, together with other action by the committee, has been made public in the formal "Address" of the Committee on Education, copies of which may be procured from Secretary W. C. Pearce, 132 La Salle Street, Chicago. Mr. Pearce has already entered fully and enthusiastically upon his great work. Trained in Illinois under the eyes of the two Jacobses, later doing a great teacher-training work in Chicago, he comes thoroughly equipped into his difficult and responsible position, and will heartily serve the thou-

sands of teachers and young people who are seeking a way to become the trained workers of the great International field.

Of the twenty-six associations whose training plans and courses of study were officially "approved" by the Committee on Education, Illinois is easily foremost, as it was first in the teacher-training field. Its normal department was organized in 1888, and its success has largely been due to the insistence of General Secretary W. B. Jacobs and the thoroughness of institute work in all the counties of the state. Its graduates now number 3,333. Ohio, under Colonel Robert Cowden, a veteran teacher trainer; Pennsylvania and Massachusetts in the East; Kansas, Iowa, and Michigan in the Middle West; Kentucky in the South; California in the Far West; Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Manitoba in Canada,—take rank next to Illinois in their years of teacher-training service, the thoroughness of their plans of work, and the numbers who have received recognition as graduates from their respective departments. Although the movement among the associations ebbs and flows in interest and power, under changing leadership, yet year by year the writer has noted how more and more deeply it has rooted itself as an integral and vital part of the finest interdenominational Sunday-school work.

THE CITY TRAINING INSTITUTE

More than a score of the greater American cities within ten years have successfully conducted extensive campaigns of house-to-house visitation. Some of these campaigns were remarkable for the skill with

which they were planned and conducted, and for the results achieved. They gave conclusive proof of the practicability of uniting the entire religious forces of a great city into one great movement. Very few of these cities as yet have entered the training-field, although the city has conditions peculiarly favorable to the maintenance of teacher-training plans. Its compact population, material facilities, its massing of religious and educational leadership, especially the readiness and spirit of its workers and the usually advanced state of its Sunday-school work, should open a way to the establishment in every city of a permanent teacher-training institute.

From the signs about me I venture the opinion that this will be the next step in Sunday-school progress. Washington, District of Columbia, has for several years been the headquarters of the American Society of Religious Education, under the direction of J. E. Gilbert, D. D., long prominent in training work. Boston, which maintains the best "superintendents' unions" in the land, has, so far, no concerted teacher-training system. Philadelphia recently organized an elaborate Institute of Teacher-Training, with weekly lectures by a faculty of six men of unusual ability, and an official course of study with graduation and diploma. How far its well-laid plans have succeeded I have not learned. New York City has its Bible Teachers' Training School, erected upon an almost ideal plan, devoting five periods of one hour each on Friday afternoons to an appointed course of study under some of the distinguished specialists of that city. Chicago is the center of the Religious Educa-

tion Association, the most recent organization for the promotion of religious education. With more than a score of departments, a membership of many distinguished ministers and educational leaders in annual convention, much should be expected of this body in helpfulness to Sunday-school teachers.

The trouble with the cities has been that their plans have usually been too elaborate and high pitched. The lecture method without text, weighty courses on psychology, and critical discussions of the Bible, are beyond the mass of plain Sunday-school workers, however profitable to advanced students. Whatever is done in the cities in ways of teacher-training must, in the beginning at least, be very simple and immediately helpful, or it will not touch the rank and file.

The most successful city experiment I have known began in Chicago in 1901, under Mr. W. C. Pearce, then Sunday-school secretary of Cook County. With a purely elementary course of study he organized his first training class, with an enrolment of two hundred students drawn from many schools, and maintained for six months of the year. In 1902, with four classes in the four sections of the city, there were often one thousand students in attendance. These students, as they were graduated, in turn organized training classes of young people in their respective Sunday-schools. The sessions of Mr. Pearce's classes were divided between the study of the training-course and the next Sunday's regular lesson. Out of these classes have already come hundreds of graduates. The very simplicity of the system, with the elementary quality of the work required, made it at once popular and ef-

fective. Now that the International Convention has erected a teacher-training department, and appointed this same leader as its secretary, a forward movement may be looked for in other cities.

AMONG THE DENOMINATIONS

In the order of evolution denominational training work comes last, and, by the same sign, is, or ought to be, best. It is the survival of the fittest. Thus far the work among the denominations is largely tentative and experimental. Its most hopeful feature is in the widespread interest aroused among all the churches. Even such denominations as have made no beginning are frank to confess through their Sunday-school leaders that they greatly need and desire the introduction of some plan of teacher-training. The denominations whose polity is "connectional" have more easily instituted their plans, but those of congregational autonomy are finding a way to broad denominational systems. The Christian, or Disciples, Church, at its convention in Detroit, in 1903, after mature consideration, appointed a strong committee to devise and direct a system of training for its teachers. Two years ago the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, by the reorganization of its Sunday-school management, made practicable and imminent the establishment of a general plan of teacher-training, in place of the synodical plans already partly in operation. The Southern Presbyterian Church is not yet officially in the field of teacher-training, but I have the assurance of its capable superintendent of Sunday-school work that this will be its next forward step. The Presby-

byterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of Canada are both actively and thoroughly enlisted. The former, under the leadership of Dr. Worden, began a good work years ago, and is now centering its training efforts upon the organization in every Sunday-school of a training-class of young people. Nearly a thousand of its schools are thus taking part. The Canadian Presbyterians, profiting by the blunders and successes of other churches, erected, in 1902, a system nearly faultless in its details, that is already becoming a power in that church. For thoroughly good work, carefulness of supervision, and ability of the men in charge, the Canadian Presbyterians are easily leading the way. The Congregationalists have not a general plan, uniform and authoritative, but in many ways and throughout their entire communion are emphasizing and enforcing the training of their teachers. Dr. Dunning and his "Bible Studies" and Institutes have for many years been an important factor in the training work, not only of Congregationalism, but of other Protestant bodies.

The Baptist Church, with its millions of members and aggressive Sunday-school spirit, is yet to organize and unify its training work. Much has been done through its staff of missionaries by way of institutes, conventions, and normal classes under the skilful leadership of such men as Blackall, Spilman, and others ; but it is the sincere hope of the writer at least that this great and progressive denomination will overcome whatever difficulties inhere in its autonomy, and erect a teacher-training system for its host of workers.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, great also in numbers and in achievement, gave Vincent, Hurlbut, and other pioneers to sow the seed the fruits of which all churches are now ready to harvest. For a time the training work, begun officially in 1868 by Vincent, intermitted, or was merged into the Chautauqua movement. During the past quadrennium, however, there has been a notable revival under Dr. T. B. Neely, the head of its Sunday-school department. Nine chosen trainers are now in the field of that church, and the "People's Bible Institute" has been set in operation for the organization of training "centers" or branches in all communities and Sunday-schools.

The Church of England in Canada has done much to further the work of teacher-training, especially in the Diocese of Nova Scotia, where there has been the most co-operation from the churches. There are 931 teachers in the diocese, and 62 now hold the diocesan diploma as a result of two examinations, and another examination will be held in May, 1904. Hurlbut's Revised Normal Lessons is the text-book in use.

WHAT SOUTHERN METHODISM IS DOING

VII

WHAT SOUTHERN METHODISM IS DOING

THE FIRST STEPS

I HAVE no apology for this exposition of what Southern Methodism is doing in teacher-training ways. An object lesson is better than a study of abstractions, and the actual methods of one denomination should be interesting and profitable to others.

A beginning was made in 1901. Dr. James Atkins, Sunday-school editor and chairman of the General Sunday-school Board, was, and is, the aggressive head of the Sunday-school department of the church. The idea of erecting a teacher-training department, as thorough and modern as it could be made, was wholly his. In the work of bringing this to pass he was cordially helped by our Book Committee and by such men as John R. Pepper and others. Considering the conservatism of the South in all religious matters, and the dependency of Methodism upon General Conference legislation, it was a bold and somewhat perilous undertaking upon the part of an officer and his Board to depart from the traditions of a department, and project a far-reaching and expensive movement, in the expectation that later General Conference action would confirm and adopt it. It is proof at once of the wisdom of the Sunday-school editor and the profound interest of Southern Methodism in Sunday-

school matters that this expectation was abundantly confirmed.

When the General Conference of the church met in Dallas in 1902, a year after the movement was tentatively begun, the episcopal address strongly urged the permanent adoption of the movement, and of the hundreds of votes taken upon the question not one was negative. The teacher-training plans were permanently included in the book of Discipline, the quadrennial appointment of a superintendent of training work was authorized, and upon all pastors it was made mandatory "as far as practicable to organize the Bible Teachers' Study Circle in their respective charges."

Partly, perhaps, because I was born into this church, but chiefly for the reason that my life work had been along the lines of teacher-training, I was called to the newly created office, and put in charge of a movement without precedent or landmark, so far as I could ascertain. I wrote to the heads of most of the American Sunday-school departments before entering upon my office, in the hope that I might be guided by their teacher-training experiences. Their prompt and kindly replies assured me that in name only, but not in actual achievement, did such departments here and there exist. I make special note of this information as I gathered it early in 1901, for the reason that it became plain to me at the time that Southern Methodism was fairly entitled to whatever honor belongs to the real pioneer in the field of denominational teacher-training, as the first great church in America or in the world to erect and main-

tain an exclusive teacher-training department, formally enacted by its law-makers, directed by a specialist, and conducted after approved modern educational principles and methods. I think this claim is already allowed by those who know the facts of Sunday-school history, but I remember the story of Columbus and the egg, and I beg pardon for saying that this particular egg was the first to stand on end.

PLAN OF WORK

The office of the Superintendent of Training Work is in the Nashville publishing house of the church, along with its other general departments. The department of training is a part of, and under the general administration of, the Sunday-school Board. The superintendent of training is accorded rank with the connectional or general officers of the church, and, whether by bishops, pastors, or the church in general, is in no wise made to suffer in honor or privilege. Indeed, from the first, *carte blanche* has been given to the training superintendent to formulate his own plans, provide all proper literature, construct his own itineraries, and in all matters pertaining to his department to plan according to his own judgment. Left free to invent and follow out his own plans, he is held responsible for results only. I take pains to state this explicitly to the credit of the church, and as a hint to the leaders of other denominations. Only when teacher-training is given high place in the legislation and administration of a church will it be rightly esteemed by ministry and laity.

Two general duties are assigned by our book of Discipline to the office of superintendent of training work,—to “conduct the Bible Teachers’ Study Circle” and to “hold institutes or conventions” auxiliary thereto. The latter duty is a vital one. It means practically the spending of three-fourths of the year in the field among the forty-six Conferences of the church, and the holding of very many meetings of Sunday-school officers and teachers in the larger cities and towns. While the programs of these meetings include all current Sunday-school questions, their chief purpose is to plant and cultivate the “Teachers’ Study Circle.” At one such meeting in Texas, for instance, I had five hundred delegates from a large Conference at the opening session. In many of my Conferences these institutes have already become annual events, provided and paid for by Conference Sunday-school Boards, and conducted by the Superintendent of Training Work. In the greater cities I am organizing permanent Methodist Sunday-school unions, which center upon the new training movement. Louisville, St. Louis, Dallas, Nashville, Atlanta, are among these cities. In one of these cities I have just closed an annual “Workers’ Conference,” which filled to overflowing a large auditorium for five consecutive nights, in which the “Circle” training plans were illustrated and enforced.

Not only among the laity, but before all ministerial gatherings, is the work presented. In Annual and District Conferences, in stated and special meetings of pastors, the training work is given prominence by

bishops, Conference boards, and presiding elders, by way of Conference anniversaries and "pastors' institutes." While here and there I find a few of these men of the cloth who hold under suspicion a departure from traditional Sunday-school ways, or who so magnify the preaching function as to neglect other ministerial responsibilities, I think I can say truly that ninety per cent of our more than five thousand effective pastors are in accord with the training work of the church. I fully realize that its success depends largely, if not wholly, upon this ministerial co-operation; and I therefore never fail to set my cause before a meeting of preachers, and to urge their support in organizing and caring for the local Circles. It has been my chief encouragement during the two years of my service that pastors are always strongly in evidence at my institutes, and many of them are, in fact, leaders of their local Circles. I have been further encouraged by the significant fact that our one theological school, the Vanderbilt University Theological Department, by which hundreds of our young pastors are being equipped, recently unanimously elected me as its Sunday-school lecturer.

THE TRAINING COURSE

The "Bible Teachers' Study Circle" comprises seven little books, averaging one hundred and fifty pages, six of these books constituting the course for teachers and seven for officers. I cannot do better than to give here, in form, the pith of a little leaflet which issues from my office in tens of thousands.

BIBLE TEACHERS' STUDY CIRCLE

FIRST COURSE

The books of the first course, in cloth, three in number, at \$1 per set, postpaid, or 50 cents each, are as follows :

"Sunday-School History and Method," Cunyningham.
History and method brought down to date.

"Sunday-School Teacher," Hamill.
A practical book on teaching.

"Bible Studies," Dunning.
A masterpiece of Bible study.

FINAL COURSE

The three books of the second, or final, course, in cloth, at \$1 per set, or 50 cents each, are as follows :

"History of Methodism" (revised), Boswell.
The very pith and essence of general Methodist history

"Our Doctrine and Polity," Atkins and Tillett.
A most timely and helpful book.

"The Bible and its Books," Hamill.
A brief story of our Bible, and study of its several books.

SPECIAL FOR SUNDAY-SCHOOL OFFICERS

The seventh and last book of the course, *for officers only*, is "The Organized Sunday-School," Axtell.

The best book on Sunday-school management that has yet appeared. Price, 40 cents, postpaid.

It is worth noting, as to the above list of books, that they are all small in volume and condensed in matter, and are sold to our students at a minimum profit ; that they include five lines of Sunday-school training,—namely, Sunday-school history and method, teaching, Bible study, Church history and doctrine, and Sunday-school management. Five of the seven books were specially written for the Circle. The omission of a book on child study in the regular

teachers' course above is provided for by allowing optional study of Black's "Practical Primary Plans" to all primary teachers. Provision is also made by the General Board for constant and exclusive service, in all institutes and conventions, of an expert primary instructor.

HONORING OUR GRADUATES

The first books were issued two years ago. Ten thousand students are now enrolled in my office, constituting six hundred and fifty local Circles, which range in membership from three or four to fifty students, in every part of our church territory. I have Circles at work in Mexico and Japan, and the books are beginning to be translated into other languages for use of foreign students. Each local Circle has one officer only, the "Circle leader," who is the intermediary between my office and his Circle, and who directs the student, applies to my office for examination questions when his Circle is ready, conducts the examinations, forwards the papers to me to be graded, and receives in return the diplomas of the church.

This leader is often the superintendent or pastor. No time limit is set for completing the course, though the Board advises two years as a minimum. The examinations are not "upon honor," but under careful local supervision, and must be attested as "fair and honest" by leader and student. As soon as a Circle completes a book, and is examined upon it, the study of the next book in prescribed order is entered upon. Whenever a Circle graduates from the full course, a special local graduating or "recognition

service" is enjoined, and is becoming adopted. At the annual conferences, in all institutes, in the teach-

"THEO THEOPHOS WHICH TEACHEST ANOTHER TEACHEST THOU NOT THYSELF?"



Bible Teachers' Study Circle
Methodist Episcopal
Church South.

Full Course Teacher's Diploma.

By authority of the Sunday School Department of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, this Full Course Teacher's Diploma is hereby conferred upon

for successfully completing the Full Course of Study and passing the several Practical Examinations of the Bible Teachers' Study Circle.

Sunday School Board



James Arthur Elder and Chairman
John William D. D. D.
Rev. William B. M. D. D.
Wm. S. Carter

H. McSwain, Secy. Training Bible

Method. Time. _____ 19__

ers' magazine of our church, the names and records of all Circle students who graduate are given honor.

At the Holston Conference Sunday-school anniversary recently, all graduates of the previous year were given place upon the platform, and were the subjects of a fine address by one of the chief officers of the church. Already several hundred partial and full-course diplomas have been issued to graduates, and the movement is quietly but surely rooting itself deeply in the minds and hearts of the ministry and laity of the church. Our bishops heartily favor it, many presiding elders zealously seek to promote it, most of our pastors are becoming sincerely interested in it, and our teachers and young people are steadily falling into line. I think this is a fair statement of the case, without "colour of rose." I can see unmistakable signs of a yet wider and deeper movement, which will extend, through specialists now in training and yet to be trained, into each Conference territory, what I am now, to the full measure of my strength, trying to do for the entire church. Within a few years our training work will demand a score or more of our best young men, equipped and appointed to serve as training superintendents within the several Conferences. Incidentally I may say, for the encouragement of other denominations, that the demand upon our church publishing houses for Sunday-school literature, books, appliances, etc., has greatly increased, and that the training movement in Southern Methodism, from a financial point of view, is more than paying its way.

A SPECIMEN TEACHER-TRAINING COURSE

VIII

A SPECIMEN TEACHER-TRAINING COURSE

Blackboard Outline

THE LESSON HALF-HOUR.

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| I. GETTING READY: O. T., C. G., C. S., A. B. C. | |
| II. TESTING. | III. TEACHING. |
| Attention. | Plan. |
| Home study. | Matter. |
| Thought. | Method. |
| IV. REVIEWING. | V. APPLYING. |
| Every Sunday. | Knowledge. |
| By the scholar. | Prayer. |
| Orderly and accurate. | The Holy Spirit, |

DRIVING A NAIL

TEACHING is like driving a nail. You have often heard of "driving the truth home," which is a figure of the carpenter and his work. One can learn to drive a nail, and any one can learn to teach. Teaching is an art, and can be mastered like stenography, or bookbinding, or housekeeping, or any one of the industrial arts. It takes time and patience, but final success is as sure as in other arts. There are few "born" teachers. They are as rare as the born musicians and artists and poets. Most of those who have become eminent as teachers in secular and religious education are self-made teachers. They learned how,—by observation, by practice, by hard

study. They were bunglers at beginning, and came to success by finding out their blunders and making them stepping-stones to higher success. Shakespeare's words might be paraphrased to fit the case : "Some are born to teach ; some have teaching thrust upon them ; but most teachers achieve teaching."

The "lesson half-hour" is the *crux* of the Sunday-school teacher. It is the supreme test of his work. Out of a whole week he has thirty golden minutes in which to teach the greatest and hardest of all books, often to boys and girls who never hear of it outside the Sunday-school class. Every minute of the thirty, every step of the teacher in that half-hour, is weighty with responsibility. There is a right way to begin it, there are right methods to use in putting the lesson before the class, and there is a right way to bring that half-hour to an end. If teaching is indeed an art, and if any one of you can learn it, you have the right to ask me : "How should I begin, and continue, and close? How can I use the short half-hour to best advantage? What are the points that a teacher must steadily keep in mind while teaching? What steps, and in what order, must I take in setting forth a Sunday-school lesson?" I shall try to make answer. I have put in outline on my blackboard five steps. No lesson can be truly taught without taking these five distinct steps. No step of the five can be omitted, if the lesson half-hour is to be effective and complete. Leave out a bone or artery of the body, and it is like the teacher who omits any one of the steps I indicate. Read with me these successive steps of the lesson half-hour : "Getting Ready," "Testing," "Teach-

ing," "Reviewing," "Applying." Let us take them in order.

GETTING READY

The one who gets ready to do a thing is likely to do it. The one who "gets ready" for business is in demand among business men. The engineer who gets ready his engine—every bolt, valve, and flue in order—is the man I like to ride behind on a journey. The lesson half-hour means only confusion and waste to the teacher who is not ready for it. I have given four points that the teacher *must* make ready if he is to make good use of his half-hour. They come *before* that half-hour begins. What is the first? (O. T.) That is old-fashioned and commonplace, but I assure you no teacher ever did, or ever will, succeed who disregards it. It stands for "On Time," which means, to the teacher, full ten minutes ahead of time. It is useless for a teacher to expect success who neglects the things that make success. The promptness of a teacher, I have noted for many years, is the sure prophecy of his success. The teacher who comes at the last minute comes mentally and spiritually out of sorts, irritable and irritating. His battle is lost in the first five minutes. He might have preoccupied the mischievous spirits of his class, and made an orderly beginning, but his late coming has lost the day's victory. Coming O. T., he should give to his scholars that "C-ordial G-reeting" which every teacher owes to his boys and girls, some of whom, I am sorry to say, know little of cordial greetings in the home. What a strange forgetfulness is that of the

teacher who fails to give a hearty hand-shake and word of welcome to the little fellows who would be so glad to get it, and who would be disarmed of mischief by it? You cannot always control the "C. S.," which stands for "comfortable surroundings," but under the worst physical conditions you can mass the class about you, putting them where they can hear you and see you face to face. I believe in the hypnotic power of the eye, and I always keep my eyes busy in teaching. I believe also in teaching at short range, and I make the radii between me and the class as short as possible. If I have one boy more mischievous than another, I take pains to place him closest to me, so that I can rest my hand—lovingly—upon him.

What is the "A. B. C." of the Sunday-school teacher? It is simply this: Putting all lesson-leaves aside, laying down in the pew everything but the one book, the Bible, and then throughout the half-hour teaching eye to eye, face to face, heart to heart,—A. B. C., "All Books Closed." It is the beginning of the alphabet of teaching, and until you are willing to do this, or at least patiently to attempt it, you might as well give over the hope of success. Learn to "shoot without a rest," if you expect ever to become an expert marksman.

TESTING

The second step is testing. You are ready now to take up the day's lesson. Your coming on time, your kindly welcome to your scholars, your plans for a comfortable hour, your thorough knowledge of what you are to teach, put you at ease, and make you

master of the situation. What am I to test? First, attention. I might say first and last, as the test of attention must run throughout every moment of the lesson, you cannot begin or continue or conclude a lesson without it. The teacher's knowledge is only one-half the circle. The other half is the scholar's attention. Resolve that you will not teach without it. Do everything possible to secure it. Make any sacrifice to get it. Hold every member of your class responsible for every part of the lesson. Never begin teaching in the least disorder. Never continue a moment after inattention sets in. Give the scholar who is wandering something to do. Ply him with questions. Be ready to spring a surprise upon any one who turns away his mind or face. Don't fret or worry or scold. Never ask for attention. Determine, by God's help, that you will have it, and methods will rise up when needed.

Test the *home study*. Remember that most scholars are lacking in parental help at home, and that thirty minutes a week is all too little for their Bible study. Plan for home study. Take every lesson to pieces a week in advance, and give out the parts to scholars. Show them precisely what you wish them to do in the home. Pledge them to read the lesson over in the home. Show them how to use lesson-leaf and Bible together in learning a lesson. Let them understand that you *expect* home study. Begin by questioning upon it in the lesson half-hour. No matter how often the reply comes, "I don't know," or "I have not studied it," keep up your opening fire of questions every Sunday, and assume that they

have studied. This is what the trained public school teacher does, and this is why "leaves" and "helps" are never seen in the secular lesson half-hour. Every influence that can be called into use is made to press upon the scholar to secure his study at home.

Test the *thought* of your scholars. Plan your questions to make them think. Do not lecture them. The lecture method may do for the college classroom, though I have my doubts about it. Certainly it is not for Sunday-school boys and girls. They need simple thought-provoking questions upon the text of the lesson. Take verse by verse, and draw out from them, each according to his ability, what the text says and what it means. Do not think for them. Give them time to think for themselves. Better let a boy or girl wrestle five minutes over a word or sentence of the text, and finally get at it, than for the teacher to fill him with a mass of knowledge he cannot digest. The best teaching in the world is that which compels the learner to do his own thinking.

TEACHING

Your opening test of home study, your constant test of attention and thought, open the way for your *plan* of the day's teaching. I need not urge that there must be a "plan" to every lesson, yet I often come upon aimless, chaotic, disjointed Sunday-school teaching, abounding in knowledge and illustration, but without form, and void. Your danger will be trying to use bodily the plans of the great lesson-writers and papers without fitting them to your smaller need. I believe in a home-made plan for every teacher.

When Saturday night comes, you should have a home-spun plan of what you are to teach, what things in the lesson are of vital account, how the lesson should begin and close, especially how it should be fitted to your scholars.

As to the matter of your teaching, that must depend upon your class. The less of the abstract and the more of the concrete you can put into your teaching of boys and girls the better. Leave "ologies" and "doctrines" to the seniors, where they will harm least. I have known scarcely a lesson in twenty-five years that did not have in it in plain sight some one great practical truth that I could make the nucleus of my lesson plan, and fit it to my boys or girls. One such truth—and you will usually find the key to it in the Golden Text—is enough for the lesson half-hour. Settle upon that, bend everything to it, go over it again and again, make it the heart of the day's teaching, and put your whole heart into it. As to a method of teaching I have little to say. Any method that drives the truth home is right. I change methods as I change my clothing. If I see a good method I borrow it, and use it, and then throw it away. Only do not use adult methods on children, or conversely. I have found nothing so good for boys and girls as the old Socratic method of the question and answer.

REVIEWING

So far, your teaching has aimed at imparting, but that is only half your work. You can never know from your own point of view as the teacher whether the scholar's learning has kept pace with you. You

must prove your teaching. No lesson is complete until the teacher knows that what he has taught the scholar has surely learned. If every teacher would apply this test to his work, his teaching would grow in simplicity and power. The old Jesuits understood it. It was "line upon line, precept upon precept," with them. They never let up until what they had set out to teach had been thoroughly learned. Therefore, review every Sunday. Review especially all hard lessons until they become easy. Do not do this reviewing yourself. Let it come from your scholars, one by one. Give each a part in it. Only what a scholar can "tell back" does he know. Take nothing for granted. Let the scholar's review or restatement of the lesson, or of some part of it, be as orderly and accurate as he can make it. Truth, in order to be retained and used readily and with profit, must be after an orderly plan, and exact in statement. Do not be discouraged if the review by the scholar seems slow and bungling. It is vastly better so as a test of his learning and a proof of your teaching, than any possible re-viewing you could do for him.

APPLYING

The last step—not always last in time—is *applying* the lesson. It is rather applying that which is vital, spiritual, and most profitable in it, to your class. The hardest thing I have to do is finding what and how to apply this one soul-saving truth. I can never come to it until by hard study I have a full knowledge of the lesson. I do not believe one can get at it by any other way than first by hard study. Certainly God will

not unlock the Bible to laggards and ignoramuses. But I find that I need to know also my boys and girls, or how can I apply the truth, after I have found it, to those whom I do not know or understand? And when I have studied my lesson the best my conditions as a teacher allowed, and have learned also to know, without and within, my Sunday-school scholars, there is just one thing more I must do—last and greatest and most needy it is—before I can truly and wisely apply the truth of God to human souls. I must go to my closet and *pray*. God forbid that I go before my boys and girls except from bended knee. “From closet to class.” When I have done all else, then, and not until then, will the Holy Spirit own and bless my lesson half-hour.

DRIVING A NAIL

How is this teaching like driving a nail? I have here a good, big, strong — (nail). I took pains to get ready as fine a nail as the hardware man could give me. Getting ready the nail is the first step,—it is coming on time, making welcome your class, knowing your lesson so that you can teach (all books closed).

What is the next thing a carpenter does with his nail? He sets it. He tests point and position and wood in setting it. He does not try to drive it head down. So the teacher must test the scholar as he drives his teaching nail.

After getting his nail and setting his nail, the carpenter *drives* his nail. Driving the nail is the direct teaching of the lesson. I drive one nail, one point, at a time. I drive it blow on blow, which is question

on question. I do not try to push it to place by main force,—which is the lecture method.

And when I have driven my teaching nail, I must then *prove* it. I must turn my board about, and see if the point of the nail has gone home. Do you see the point?

Last comes the *clinch*ing of my nail. Get it, set it, drive it, prove it, but do not fail to have it clinched. Some one else must do that for you. Your study and knowledge and prayer will help, but at the last it is only the Holy Ghost who can clinch the truth as you drive it home to the mind and heart of the scholar.

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