

**THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL
TEACHER**



Prof. H.M. Hamill



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The Sunday school teacher





THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

BY

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE purpose of this book is not strictly pedagogical, but relates rather to the practical work of the Sunday school teacher. Severely trained in the vocation of the secular teacher, afterwards called for many years to the work of a Sunday school specialist, the writer has noted that most of our Sunday school teachers have little time or inclination for a study of the science of teaching. As busy week day workers in home and office, store and farm, their limitations are such that they cannot hope to compete in pedagogic equipment with those whose life work is to teach. Nor should it be expected of them, in view of the wide differences between the secular and the Sunday school teacher. What the latter needs and covets is the art rather than the science of teaching. This need has been kept steadily in mind in the preparation of this little book, which is the outgrowth of fellowship with hosts of Sunday school teachers whose sincere ambition is to teach skillfully the Holy Scriptures. That it may prove helpful to these faithful servants of the Church is my earnest prayer.

H. M. HAMILL.

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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

THE Sunday school teacher, by warrant of the Scriptures or in the order of Providence, is second only to the preacher. His commission is directly from God, and his place of usefulness is becoming more and more recognized by the Church. "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles," etc. This declaration of Paul is worthy of the modern teacher's study. The ancient order of "apostles" has passed away. The "prophets" are merged into pastors. The teacher in the pew is next to the man in the pulpit; and the working of miracles takes lower rank than the teaching of a Sunday school class. To teach at all is a work of grave responsibility; but to teach the Bible to childhood and youth, in the one formative period of life, is a peculiarly sacred vocation. Our Lord is fittingly called "the Great Teacher;" and the Gospels record significantly how he, and the apostles who succeeded him, "went about teaching and preaching." The skilled Sunday school teacher, trained intellectually and spiritually for his great work, is the immi-

nent need of the home, the Church, and the State. The "signs of the times," if thoughtfully interpreted, abundantly confirm this statement. By the neglect of the home, the demands upon the Sunday school teacher have multiplied. The Bible has passed from the secular to the Sunday school; and the State, so dependent for its prosperity upon the inculcation of Bible precepts, must look to the Sunday school alone for religious instruction of its youth. The Church, slow at first to realize its educational and evangelistic opportunity, has come at last to recognize in the Sunday school teacher its most profitable servant. In the light of these multiplying demands the Sunday school teacher must do his work. If he heed the calls to a larger equipment for the service committed to him, the blessing of God and his Church will be upon him in greater power than ever in his past. But if he refuse or neglect, "his office let another take." The Church of the next generation will see to it that its teachers are workmen of whom "it needeth not to be ashamed."

I. THE TEACHER'S WORK.

I. AS A CHRISTIAN.

THE teacher who is not a Christian in deed and in truth discredits the sacred place he holds, and "daubs with untempered mortar." His first duty is to get right with God—that is, if he intends to continue teaching; if not, there is only one right course, he should resign. But there are Christians and Christians, and the marks of the true Christian teacher should be defined.

1. He should have a clear and definite *experience*. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh. Like begets like in spiritual as in other things, and the Sunday school teacher who is himself untaught of God cannot efficiently teach his class the way of life. Such is the free grace of God, and so plain are the teachings of his Word, that any teacher reading these lines, and knowing that his life is not right, may, in one short hour, if he is sincere in his desire, get right before God, the Church, and his class. Educational fitness comes slowly; not so, however, is

the law of the kingdom of grace. He that "confesseth and forsaketh" his sin "shall find mercy."

2. He should have an earnest purpose *to save souls*. The teacher who has no conversions in his class is an anomaly. To save the scholars is his supreme duty, and his position gives to him an opportunity beyond that of even parent and pastor. The final test of a teacher is not how well he has studied or taught, but how many he has saved.

3. The truly Christian teacher will use the "*means of grace*." These are prayer, almsgiving, attendance upon the services of the Church, the study of the Bible devotionally, etc. God has instituted these means, in the full use of which there is spiritual growth, and without which there will be leanness of soul.

4. The teacher must exercise *self-denial*. When one becomes a Sunday school teacher, it is at once a question of example to others, rather than of allowance to one's own conscience in things doubtful. The teacher, for the sake of his scholars, is called to acts of self-denial as to things which his conscience may justify in himself, but which might offend some of God's little ones. The Pauline law of offense forever sweeps away all questionable amusements and self-indulgences.

II. AS A CHURCH MEMBER.

1. The teacher in a Sunday school should be a thoroughgoing *Church member*. Each Church stands for a body of doctrine and a polity which differentiate it from other Churches. To be a thorough Church member is to believe that one's Church is first and best among Churches, and to indoctrinate one's scholars in that belief. There is no place in the Sunday school for teachers who are half-hearted and apologetic when the denominational issue is raised. A teacher is the better for having a backbone of denominational conviction.

2. A Sunday school teacher should be an *intelligent* Church member. He should read books upon the history of his Church, and know something of the ordeals through which it has passed and of the triumphs which it has achieved. He should familiarize himself with its doctrine and polity. It is a reproach to a teacher not to own and to study some book containing the history and standards of his own denomination.

3. He should be a loyal *supporter* of his Church in all practical ways. Loyalty means more than a conviction that one's Church is right, and a knowledge of its doctrine and history. It means the giving of money, labor, and influence to its support at home and abroad, in the way of pay-

ing the salary of the pastor, building churches, extending its home and foreign missions. It means holding up the pastor's hands, attending his ministry, working for one's Church and Sunday school, in the endeavor to make them the best in the community. The teacher's example for good in this respect will infect his scholars, and he will grow a crop of loyal and helpful Church members.

III. AS A BIBLE STUDENT.

1. The teacher must take *time for study*. A few minutes daily, if used with system, will accomplish much. Spasmodic and fitful study avails little. Time is needed for meditation and reflection. Without these the preparation of a lesson will be superficial and without power. There ought to be daily study. The daily habit once formed, the study intensifies.

2. It should first be a study of *the Bible itself*, without the "helps." The blunder of many teachers is the preoccupation of the mind by the studies of others rather than by one's own first study of the Bible text. However learned the helper may be, or exhaustive his exposition of the Bible, it cannot take the place of the teacher's duty to himself as a student. "Knowledge is power," but it is one's own home-grown

knowledge that is meant in that time-honored maxim.

3. The teacher should learn to *think for himself*. He needs for his own growth to force his mind and heart through the slow and sometimes painful processes of thought. The one who exercises grows. He cannot attain growth as a thinker through the mental exercise of another. Here is the peril of many teachers. They count on being good thinkers without thinking, and lapse into servitude and inefficiency.

4. The teacher should first apply the truth of the lesson *to himself*. There is, or ought to be, in every Sunday school lesson something which the teacher can use for his own spiritual nourishment. Who feeds another should have a care to feed himself. The fable of the French chef who prepared the finest food for the guests, yet was found dead from starvation, is an illustration of those teachers who minister to the souls of scholars, but go unnourished by the Word of Life.

5. The teacher should study *the whole Bible*. Studying the weekly lessons is studying it "in spots;" and, if nothing more is attempted, will not make one a good Bible student. The student who knows a whole book of the Bible knows better the particular lesson that may be taken from it. Each book in itself is a unit of doctrine or history or prophecy, and is part of a yet greater

unity in the whole Bible. The life of the average teacher is not too short or his condition too severe to get a good, well-rounded knowledge of the entire Bible. No matter how elementary this general knowledge, it will add much to the power and spirit of one's teaching, to say nothing of the joy it will bring to the student. Week by week, every teacher ought to have at his side for moments of study some one of the many excellent normal courses which set before him, in condensed form, this general view of the Bible.

IV. AS A TEACHER.

Teaching is an art; therefore the teacher should strive to master it. There are three ways by which a teacher may learn how to teach:

1. The first is by *observation*. In every Sunday school there is some one (or more) who ranks as its most successful teacher. Observe this finest teacher, and discover his methods of teaching; study his way of getting and holding attention; see how he begins his teaching, and try to find out his plan of putting the truth; note how he draws out his scholars, and how he holds his class to the thought of the day's lesson. Watching a good teacher teach is a fine normal opportunity, and it is ready at hand for the use of every one who seeks improvement.

2. The second method of learning is *by prac-*

tice. Practice here, as elsewhere, makes perfect. No amount of fine theory can take the place of the inevitable practice that must assure success. A good method may be discovered in the teaching of another. Take it, use it, and watch its effect upon your scholars. If it quickens interest, continue to use it; if not, drop it and try another. Be careful that you attempt only what your good judgment approves, but do not be afraid to make experiments. Edison tried a thousand times and more before he set his incandescent light agoing. When you find that you have a good, all-round method working successfully, hold to it, and try to make it better. But be willing to practice the art of the teacher painstakingly, in the assurance that only by this slow process can you hope to attain ease and skill. Be sure that success comes not by a single bound, except to a genius. The chances are that you are not a genius.

3. The third method is by reading *books on teaching*. There are several such books, written by past masters in the art of teaching. The cost is small. Get one of these, read it carefully, think over it, compare what it offers with your ways of teaching; and then put into practice what you have digested, shaping it to the special needs of your class. The foundation principles of teaching will be found in most of these books.

One good book on teaching, thoroughly mastered, cannot fail to make you a better teacher. To read such a book is to sit at the feet of some teacher of large experience, and have him speak into your ear the best thought of a lifetime of labor and achievement.

V. AS A PASTOR.

The Sunday school teacher, by virtue of his office, is an under-pastor of the Church, supplementing the work of the pastor in chief along all lines of pastoral helpfulness to the scholars of his class. To this end:

1. He must be a *safe example*. Paul admonished Timothy to "take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine." The first concern of a teacher should be himself. He cannot escape being an example. He will be closely copied, for good or evil. What is evil in him will be copied most surely and closely. There is nothing truer than the homely proverb: "Like teacher, like scholar." Let not the teacher delude himself by assuming that a safe public example, in the eye of the class and while on duty, is enough. He is all the more dangerous as a leader if there is anything questionable in his manner of life.

2. He must be a *faithful friend*. Anybody can call himself "friend," but a truly faithful friend is hard to find. Such friendship does not

court popularity, or spend itself in sentiment. It does not shrink from telling the truth in love. It keeps guard over the faults of one's scholars, and speaks the word of admonition in season and in private. Paul saw the weak points in Timothy, and helped him by faithful warning to overcome them. Our Lord saw the crooked things in Peter's life, and saved him out of them. To set a safe example is of negative value, unless there is added to it the positive endeavor of a faithful friend who seeks to save his scholars from themselves.

3. He must "*shepherd his flock.*" He carries, or ought to carry, the marks of the Good Shepherd upon him. He "knows his sheep." He "finds pasture for them." His sheep "know his voice," and are known of him, and "follow him." What Christ was to the twelve, the teacher must seek to be to his scholar—teacher, companion, friend, overseer, pastor! Let him strive most of all to be able to say at the last, as Christ did the night before he died: "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost."

II. THE TEACHER'S HELPS.

I. EDUCATIONALLY.

THESE are many and of much value. Indeed, it is an era of Sunday school helps, every problem in study and teaching being fully discussed in books or papers. The teacher is wise who makes his helps his servants and not his masters.

1. *A Teacher's Bible.*—This should hold the first place in the teacher's use and affection. Such a Bible—the Oxford, Bagster, International, etc.—well-bound, with index, concordance, table of pronunciation, explanations, analysis and history of books, is a lifelong library of helpfulness in itself. An interleaved Bible, costing little more, will be found of service for permanent notes and additions.

2. *Church Helps.*—These should take the first place, after the Bible. Every Church, through its Sunday school department, provides such helps for its own teachers. In the wide range of subjects treated and in the ability of their editors and writers, these helps stand highest. Every phase of Bible study or of Sunday school method, together with a knowledge of the Church and its doctrines, is given by them. The teacher owes it to the Church for which he

teaches, and to the work he is called by it to do, to equip himself with the helps thus liberally provided.

3. *A Teacher's Normal Library.*—The best workmen use few tools, but they must be of finest quality. So a few well-chosen books upon the teacher's work will be of great benefit. Every Sunday school should be the possessor of a normal library, if only a few well-selected volumes. As an aid to school or individual selection, a list of the best books for such a library is given elsewhere in this book.

4. *A Teacher's Meeting.*—Whatever helpfulness may come from other sources, there is nothing better than the old-fashioned teachers' meeting, where safety in Bible study and teaching method is to be found in a "multitude of counselors." Nothing can take the place of this heart-to-heart study. If one-third of the session could be devoted to a consideration of the school's needs, another third to bringing out the best "teaching points" of the next Sunday's lesson, and the remaining third to the reading, in course, of the normal books referred to above, the teachers' meeting would become an indispensable help to every teacher.

5. *Conventions and Institutes.*—These are usually held in every city or State, either denominationally or interdenominationally, for the

study of improved Sunday school methods. They represent the best Sunday school thought and experience of the Churches, and, because the needs of all teachers are substantially the same, such meetings are in large degree helpful in stimulating, suggesting, and explaining methods of work. Teachers have much to gain and nothing to lose in attendance upon such meetings. If there is anything in Sunday school work better than one has, let him be quick to find and apply it. If one has something better than others, let him not selfishly withhold it.

II. SOCIALLY.

The social side of the teacher's work is an important factor in his success. Through this a *permanent influence* bearing upon the scholar's life is secured which will often compensate for inferior skill in study and teaching.

1. *The Teacher's Manner.*—First comes the teacher's manner, attracting or repelling, in and out of the Sunday school. The entrance into the scholar's heart and conscience is usually on the social side of his life. Does the teacher cultivate the social art? Does he seek to utilize it with his scholars? Does he greet them gladly, with warm heart and hand? Does he concern himself about their home and school life, their petty troubles and pleasures? Does he **make**

them feel at home in his presence? Does he court a passing moment with them? Does he have an apt and cheery word with them whenever they meet? Do his scholars say, as one did recently: "I know my teacher loves me, because he is always so glad to see me?" If the answer to these questions is "Yes," it is well with the teacher; if not, his fine study and teaching will count for little.

2. *The Home Influence.*—This is a strong social helper. The "short cut" to a boy's management runs through his home. The teacher's occasional talk with the parents of his scholars by the home fireside will solve most of the difficult problems of the work. It is the "ounce of preventive." A frank statement of the teacher's plans, an explanation of his methods, an earnest appeal for parental coöperation in attendance, study, and deportment, will set most fathers and mothers upon the teacher's side.

3. *The Class Spirit.*—If handled wisely, this is a strong element of helpfulness. It is well to effect a class organization, with its officers, rules, and by-laws, its class meetings and motto, its plan of study, etc. Boys and girls relish a sense of responsibility, and a class is best conducted that has learned to manage itself. The class spirit, if kept in bounds, will do more than the

teacher can do to stimulate the lazy and indifferent ones.

III. SPIRITUALLY.

1. *The Scholar's Conscience.*—In youth this is tender and sensitive. It is quick to discern between the right and the wrong. "The light that lighteth every one that cometh into the world" is the fine conscience of the child. Education or example may warp it, but as it comes from God to the child it has pure instincts, and will prove the teacher's strong helper. Let the appeal be made direct to the childish conscience in matters of right and wrong. Urge the plain Word of God upon it, and conscience will be quick to discern and to respond. The child's conscience is upon the side of right to begin with, whatever its parentage or home, or however dulled and blunted it may afterwards become. Like the photographer's plate, it is sensitive to every ray of light, but its sensitiveness may soon be irreparably gone.

2. *Special Prayer.*—The effectual, fervent prayer of the Sunday school teacher availeth much. One by one each scholar's name and needs should be carried before a loving Christ in earnest, daily prayer. From time to time the teachers of the school should convene before or after the session, in a season of special prayer

for the scholars. A prayer in the home of the scholar, with and for him, may seem a little thing, but it is not forgotten by the scholar. The teacher who prays much for his scholars is little troubled by their waywardness and inattention. Of the prayers that ascend daily to the throne of grace, surely none receive more loving audience than the teacher's prayer for the scholars of his class.

3. *The Word in Season.*—There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. In the presence of the class, upon the Sabbath day, a truth or duty may be generally urged. But the wise teacher knows the value and helpfulness of a moment's personal word in the ear of the individual scholar, where there is none but God to hear. Many a career has been turned about by a moment's well-timed, loving plea. Such a word, fitly spoken, is "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

4. *The Holy Spirit.*—This is the teacher's abiding Helper. Bending over him as he studies the lesson, going with him into the homes of the scholars, standing by him on the Sabbath as he teaches, comforting him as he prays for his class, the Holy Spirit is ever present with the teacher who lives near to God and does the best work his opportunities allow. He convinces of sin; he makes the lesson a two-edged sword to cut into the conscience; he makes anew the scholar's

heart and life; he is the interpreting Spirit; he alone can indue with "power from on high." To every true teacher this Spirit is pledged as Comforter and Friend, and with his help failure is impossible.

III. THE TEACHER'S LESSON STUDY.

I. AS TO TIME.

1. *Study Daily.*—Fifteen or twenty minutes of daily study of next Sunday's lesson is better than hours massed together upon a single day. Study cannot be forced at the last moment. It takes time for it to grow.

2. *Study When Freshest.*—The evening hour, when body and mind are worn by the day's labors, is the least profitable for Bible study. Set a time early in the day, before business begins, and there will be gain educationally and spiritually.

3. *Begin at Once.*—Begin Sunday afternoon, while heart and mind are warm with the lesson just taught. A good beginning tends toward a good ending. Do not procrastinate. The bane of many teachers is in waiting for "a more convenient season."

4. *Form a Habit of Study.*—The mind is as much a creature of habit as the body. It does its best work periodically. The habit of daily study of the Bible at a definite hour soon becomes a source of pleasure and of power. But it takes a determined will and much patience to hold one's self to the habit.

II. AS TO LESSON HELPS.

1. *A Bible Dictionary*.—Next to a Teacher's Bible, this is the teacher's best help. It deals with the Bible topically, and gives needed light upon doubtful matters.

2. *The Teacher's Commentary*.—Every Church supplies such a commentary upon the current lessons for its teachers, usually in periodical form. It sifts, analyzes, and makes plain the lesson in ways that unaided study cannot attain. Besides these Church helps, there are great papers devoted to expositions of the Sunday school lessons.

3. *The Marginal References* and changes of the various revisions will be found of much help especially the former. There is scarcely a difficult word or statement in the Bible which is not marginally noted. Read carefully these references, and you will be surprised what light will fall upon the dark places of the lesson.

4. *Pencil and Paper*.—Form the habit of making pencil notes as you study. Many fine thoughts will thus be put to paper, to be called up again when you teach. Write out your questions as you study. Make up a written outline, or skeleton, of the lesson, giving the teaching "points" as you think them out.

5. *Meditation*.—Take your daily morning study

with you to the shop, the farm, or the store; and meditate upon it in spare moments. "Chew the cud of reflection" while at work: It will not hinder, but will often sharpen the edge of your work. There is a power in one's meditative thought upon a lesson beyond other human helps. There are three distinct processes in taking food: mastication, digestion, assimilation. So in Bible study: searching the Scriptures is mastication; meditation upon it is digestion; living it out in righteous living is assimilation.

III. AS TO METHODS.

1. *Study a Book.*—The best general method of Bible study is book study. The best beginning for a series of Sunday school lessons is to study as a whole the book from which the lessons are to be taken. The meaning of the book will set in clearer light the meaning of the several lessons. Read the book through, if you can, at a single sitting. Read it in the light of its *authorship*, its *time*, the *circumstances* of the writing, the *persons* to whom it is written, its *special purpose*, and its *relation* to the other books of the Bible.

2. *Study the Connection.*—Nearly every lesson is related to the lessons going before and after it. Read the intervening Scriptures, and carry forward the thread of connection to next Sunday's lesson. There is no stronger mental law

than the "association of ideas," and the plan of keeping up the connection between the lessons, for both teacher and scholar, will help to their better retention and understanding.

3. *Study the Lesson Text.*—The literal text—its words, phrases, idioms, sentences—comes next in order. Read it verse after verse; study its words and their meanings, the import of its statements; make plain to your understanding what the text means. Do this first. Much misunderstanding of the Bible comes from carelessness in getting at the simple text. If the meaning is obscure to the teacher, it will be more so to his scholars. Put the lesson into your own words, changing its forms and modernizing its language, until you see clearly what it means, and is intended to state. Make no haste to generalize and discover "points." Plain study of the text itself is the teacher's first need.

4. *Make an Outline.*—After you have gone over the lesson, verse by verse, in study of the text, setting its statements clearly in order, think out and write down an outline of the spiritual teachings. This is *generalizing* the lesson, and involves patient thought. The temptation will be strong to resort to the "helps" and see what the lesson writers say, but yielding will be fatal to original thought. Think for yourself: First, what does the text mean? secondly, what does

the lesson as a whole teach? Usually the lesson will teach many things, but hold to the plain and logical doctrine of the lesson, in the light of the book and the connection out of which the lesson is taken.

5. *Study the Golden Text.*—The Golden Text, in the purpose of the Lesson Committee, is the key to the spiritual thought of the lesson. Fit it to the lesson, and the lesson to it. Hold to such points only as are in line with it, and you will generally be correct. This is the secret of the success of the primary teachers. They make their teachings to crystallize about the one great truth in the Golden Text.

6. *Study the "Helps."*—By these are meant all expository helps supplied by your Church—commentaries, papers, periodicals, books, etc. Compare their analysis with your own. See what points in teaching they suggest, and how far your own thinking agrees with theirs as to the great truth the lesson is set to teach. But do not throw aside your own conclusions. Your weapon is the sling; theirs, the sword and shield. You cannot climb to their level of knowledge and thought, and teach as they do. Use their thought only as suggestive, but hold fast to your own studies of the lesson. You have now a double view: your own as you have studied it out, and the view of the best Bible students of

your Church. Between the two you can see more clearly what to choose for your scholars, as suited to your skill as a teacher and to their needs as a class. Choose the simpler and easier things of the lesson, along the lines of its spiritual thought. Do not select the hard points and complex analysis of the professors of Bible learning. Follow their fine leadership as they separate error from truth, but keep your own distance and stand upon your own familiar ground.

IV. THE TEACHER'S LESSON PLAN.

By planning the lesson is meant getting it in shape for teaching it. Mere study without this planning is like gathering materials for the construction of a house. It is but lumber, brick, and stone. The architect's plan is needed before saw or hammer is used. Teachers fail at this point, deeming their study of the lesson in itself ample preparation for the teaching of it.

To plan a lesson for teaching should involve three steps in order, as follows:

1. Thinking it over without book or help.
2. Sifting the lesson to get at its essentials.
3. Adapting it to the needs, intellectually and spiritually, of one's scholars.

I. THINKING IT OVER.

1. Begin by *thinking over* the lesson, putting everything aside but the open Bible. Take the lesson and read it over and over, and think your way through it, verse by verse. Think and pray together for light. Turn the verses about, put them into the language of your class, strip the lessons of its idioms and peculiarities, and try to make it conform to your everyday life. Bring it down to date as far as you can, and

make it a living spiritual message for the present needs of yourself and scholars.

2. Try to *analyze* the thought of the lesson, and to get at its points of truth. The Lesson Committee, learned Bible men, chose the lesson with much care because of some great truth which it contains and which needs to be emphasized. Discover this truth, if you can, for and of yourself. You will be tempted to turn away from the Bible in order to find it, but remember our Lord said it is sometimes "hidden from the wise and revealed unto babes." Stick to your own thinking, write down your own thoughts, one by one, as they rise before you. If you compel yourself to think, be sure the thoughts will come.

3. Think how you can *make plain* the points of the lesson, how you can link the spiritual things in it with the experiences of everyday living; what objects, incidents, stories, pictures you will use in illustration; what motives, desires, ambitions, on the part of your scholars, you will weave in with the truth, so as to make the truth attractive and telling. Remember that Jesus taught not "save by parables."

II. SIFTING THE LESSON.

1. Descend now to the *scholar's level*. Remember how hard it was for you as a child to

understand the Bible, and how little pains some teacher perhaps took to place himself at your side and upon the level of your childish way of thinking and learning. Try to put yourself in the scholar's place, and see with his eyes, and hear with his smaller mental sense.

2. Out of the mass of things from the lesson—historical, doctrinal, biographical, moral, and spiritual—study what should be omitted. Much of it, in the nature of the case, is mere scaffolding; some of it, though fine enough to be used, does not bear upon your class; your time is short, some of your scholars are dull and un-instructed at home; all of them can learn and digest and retain a little of the truth, if you will make it plain and easy to them. Therefore sift your material, and make the dullness of the scholar, and not your own higher level of thought, the test of what you retain. Throw everything away but that which you are sure you can put within the understanding of the class; but take care that what you keep for them holds within it the spiritual thought of the lesson.

III. ADAPTING THE LESSON.

1. Now comes *individualism* in teaching, which is the secret of all true teaching. Christ taught salvation to both Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, and his doctrines were nearly

the same in both instances. But his method varied. He encouraged the woman, he reproved the rabbi; he drew out the Samaritan, he repressed the Jew with his conceit of knowledge. So must you study out methods of applying the lesson to the varied conditions of your scholars. One boy is dull: plan to draw him out, give him the easiest thing in the lesson to consider and to do. Another is bright and quick, too quick perhaps: engage his mind with what will set him thinking. Take the dull ones as the measure and test of your teaching. Plan especially to interest and arouse them. Keep them ever in mind, as you are sifting the lesson and making ready what and how you will teach.

2. Write down questions, as you are making ready the lesson plan. See that each has point and compels thought. Adapt them to the varied conditions of the scholars. Be sure that you include in your plan something for every scholar in the class. Never let a scholar go from you without having had some direct part in the hour's teaching. Knowing the scholars intimately as you should, you can "feather" and aim your questions as the Indian feathers and aims his arrows—at a definite mark.

3. The last thing to do in planning a lesson will be to allow to each part of it its definite portion of time. There will be some reviewing

at the beginning, some making plain the hard words of the text, some clearing up of strange allusions and customs, some exploration of the persons and places of the lesson, some drill of the entire class upon the points you desire especially to emphasize—all of these bringing out clearly the *one great spiritual truth* which the lesson is designed to teach and which your scholars need to know and receive. How much time is to be given here and there, to this or that part of the teaching, common sense and teaching experience must decide. One thing, however, is plain: if you spend most of the time on the scaffolding, little will be left for the building itself. If the time is frittered away in cracking the nut, there will be no profit from the uneaten kernel. The lesson fails if it does not reach the conscience and heart, and only the truth in the lesson will do that.

V. THE LESSON HALF HOUR.

THIS is the crucial test of teacher and school; the fine point of contact, disciplinary, educational, and evangelistic. As goes the teaching, goes the school. Whatever else the school may be or have, in fine music, modern appliances, great numbers; or if it is only a log cabin, windowless and with "slab" benches and a handful of rough boys and girls—if the lesson half hour is well used, it merits its name of Sunday school.

I. DISCIPLINARY.

The lesson half hour involves *discipline*. Good teaching goes hand in hand with good order, and good order hinges on the skill of the teacher and the conditions that environ his class. Some of these conditions are hindrances, removable by the use of tact and good judgment; or, if irremovable, to be made the most of. Nothing about the real Sunday school is ideal, and the teacher who expects it and is discouraged at lack of it is an unwise teacher. Some of the hindrances to the lesson half hour are:

1. *Shortness of time.* Thirty minutes out of a whole week for Bible-teaching looks small indeed; but consider how many forces for good

converge upon it, and it will become to you a great opportunity.

2. *Crowded and poorly graded classes*, which is easily remedied and in few cases is inevitable.

3. *Physical discomfort*, such as dingy rooms, ill lighted and ventilated, hard, high benches, etc. This too might be bettered; but if not, let it be remembered that the elastic spirit of youth has a buoyancy that easily rises above mere physical inconveniences.

4. *Lack of preparation*, from failure to study at home. Much can be done to overcome this; but in any event the teacher is upon a level with the preacher, who must open up the minds of his hearers without preparation on their part.

5. *Noisy teachers*, who, in every school, by boisterous speech and inconsiderate methods, are a nuisance. Only the superintendent or death will abate these, but take care that you follow not their evil example.

6. *Interruptions*, usually by officers, permitted by the superintendent, and breaking in upon the half hour's teaching. There is no excuse for this condition; and if the powers that be will not mend it, resign at once. Better not be a teacher than to make a mock of it.

7. *Disorderly scholars*, who infect the orderly ones, spoil the teacher's work, and sorely try

his patience. As long as the doctrine of depravity stands, this will be inevitable. But the crowning work of the teacher is the conquest of such scholars. To win but one and make a Christian gentleman of him is greater than the taking of a city.

Per contra, there are conditions about the lesson half hour to be set over against its hindrances, which the teacher should gratefully consider:

1. There are *young minds*, willing for the most part to learn, often pathetic in their hunger for the truth. Do not regard the mere outward seeming of indifference as a test of how well the scholars are learning.

2. There are *young hearts*, which are more than young minds. However mischievous and restless the average Sunday school boy or girl may be, there is a young, impressible heart within him or her, not yet in keeping of the evil one, and the marks of the loving teacher upon it will be ineffaceable in time and eternity.

3. There is the *Holy Bible*, the one text of the Sunday school, about which gather the traditions and worship of the ages. That teacher has seen little who has not noted reverence for God's Book even in the gamin of the street, as it lies open upon his lap in the Sunday school.

4. Bending over that book is its divine Interpreter, the *Holy Spirit*, who will turn weakness into strength and darkness into light for the teacher whose life merits the help. The Holy Spirit is pledged to the aid of that Book, and by it he will compel conviction of sin and need of Christ. It is folly for the teacher of any class, however rude or careless, to yield for a moment to discouragement over the outcome of his teaching, when he knows, or ought to know, that from the first to the last moment of the lesson half hour the Holy Spirit, Teacher, and Guide of the Church, is at his side helping to make the most of his teaching.

II. EDUCATIONAL.

In considering the educational points of the lesson half hour, something depends on the tools with which one works, as well as the way in which he works.

1. The *use of Bibles* in the class is of first importance, whether used with or without the "helps." The lesson leaves may be at hand, but their proper work comes before the lesson half hour and not during it. There is a unique value in having the Bible in the hands of the scholars, and in training them to ready and familiar use of it. Verse by verse the lesson should be read deliberately by scholars designated, and every

effort made to give impressiveness to it as the Word of God.

2. *Fixing Attention.*—This comes with practice, and must be had at any cost, as nothing can be learned without it. Remember, however, that the restless activity of the youthful mind is encouragement to seize upon and turn it to good account. The teacher must learn to “catch the eye” of the mind, and to watch for signs of flagging interest.

3. *Self-Help.*—This is the stumbling-block to many teachers, whose mistaken kindness would carry the burden of thinking upon themselves rather than lay it upon the scholars. It is a kindness to the scholar to let him do the thinking to the limit of his ability. Let the facts of the lesson be brought out from the Bible, and then give time to the scholars to think out right conclusions, helping only after they have helped themselves.

4. *The Text of the Lesson.*—The teacher’s first duty to the Bible is to make plain the text of the lesson, to get at the meaning of its words, to turn it into the scholar’s way of speech. The best way to do this is to carefully note beforehand each word and expression out of the range of the scholar, and to begin the lesson by clearing up these textual difficulties. Doing this constantly will beget a habit on the part of the

class of thinking over the matter read, which is a fine educational gain.

5. *Repeating the Truth.*—In every lesson there are a few great truths which should be framed by the teacher in advance in the simplest and fewest words, and then drilled upon over and over by repetition, first by the individual scholar, then by the entire class. Nothing will fix in mind and heart the salient thought of the lesson, and at the same time hold the attention at work, like this going over the chief points of the lesson. But they must be first clearly stated by the teacher.

6. *Something for Each.*—The most common blunder of the lesson half hour is allowing part of the class to do the work of thinking and learning, and failing to lay upon every scholar some share of the work proportioned to his ability. The boy who is given a part will respond by taking part, and will be spurred on to take larger part and to do better work: Dullards are kept dull, and others are made dull, by the neglect of the teacher to draw them out and make them do their share of the work.

As to *methods* of teaching a lesson, the choice will depend upon the age, ability, and environment of the scholars. The method ought to be varied from time to time, and several methods may be properly combined in the same lesson.

1. The *story-telling* method is best for primary and younger intermediate classes. The teacher carefully prepares the lesson with the little ones in mind, reduces it to a story, and tells it as accurately and simply as possible, using pictures, objects, and blackboard, and questioning upon the story as she proceeds with it, in order to see if she is understood. Afterwards she has the children to repeat and explain the story to her in their own childish words and way. This simple method lies at the basis of all good teaching.

2. The *analytical* method is a step higher, and is better suited to the big boys and girls. The teacher reads the verses of the lesson, or has them read one by one, and questions the scholars individually, and in the simplest form, upon the words, statements, and meanings of the verse, so that the text itself will be made plain. It is not so much a study of "doctrines" and "points" as of the simple lesson text. Such a method quickens the attention of the scholars and fixes their minds upon what the Bible *says*

3. The *lecture* method is suited to adults. The teacher questions little or none, although inviting and encouraging questions from the class. He presents the lesson after the form of a lecture, setting forth its "points" in an orderly manner, and applying its truths to the pres-

ent conditions of his class. Teachers of adult Bible classes have found this the most popular method, for the reason that ignorance as to questions asked of adults is more embarrassing than with children and youth. Many will sit with such a class, and receive profit from the teacher's lecture, who would stay away if individual questions were asked.

4. The *colloquial* method is the best "all-round" method for well-trained classes. Under this method verse after verse is taken up in order by members of the class (using Bible only), read and expounded by each in his own way; the teacher informally correcting, modifying, or stating contrary views, the utmost freedom being allowed to teacher and class. Under a prudent teacher, of firmness and tact to curtail needless discussion and to hold the class to the main truths of the lesson, such lesson study has a peculiar charm and profit. But its success depends upon the wisdom of the leader, without which the colloquial method degenerates into profitless and "cranky" discussion.

III. EVANGELISTIC.

The lesson half hour means more than Bible study. The Bible is studied in order to convert and to form character, not for mere knowledge of the book. It needs to be urged upon

teachers more than ever in these days of fine teaching methods that the primary work of the Sunday school is not educational but evangelistic. It is not learning the Bible as a book, but putting it into practice as the supreme rule of life. The lesson that is made plain to the mind but does not find its way into the heart is a failure. There are some things pertaining to the evangelistic work of the teacher which should be kept in mind as a guide to better spiritual effort:

1. *Knowing the Scholar.*—Not so much his social or mental as his spiritual condition. Is he already a Christian? Is he upon the border line, and “not far from the kingdom?” Is his conscience yet sensitive? Is he the slave of some bad habit? Is he growing careless religiously? Has he light and trivial notions of religion? Does he realize his need of Christ? The teacher must know the answers to these questions, if he is to become the saving instrument of God.

2. *The Constant Use of the Word.*—There is a strange power in the words themselves of the Bible; not the teacher’s words about the Bible, but the Bible itself. Use God’s words rather than your own. Read the lesson; turn often to the open Bible; read it slowly and prayerfully. It is sharper than any two-edged sword.

3. *Appealing to Conscience.*—Make the appeal direct and incisive. It is the thrust of the sword. Remember that now, more than ever, is the young conscience quick and tender; therefore fail not to arouse it.

4. *Appealing to Decision.*—The bond of affection between teacher and scholar is peculiarly close, and allows much spiritual freedom. No one can enter the youthful “holy of holies” more freely than the Sunday school teacher. Aim at the innermost confidence of the scholar. Use your love for him and his confidence in you to secure his personal decision for Christ. Your heart will be made to rejoice if you thus become a shepherd of souls.

5. *A Moment of Prayer.*—With every lesson half hour there should be a little moment of united prayer with your class, with bowed head over the Word of God, inaudible it may be, yet an earnest pleading with God for the scholars and for the help of the Holy Spirit in arresting wayward minds, touching young hearts, giving skill to impart the truth, making tender the conscience, and blessing the solemn work of another Sabbath day. Years may come and go, but the scholars will recall reverently these moments of prayer in the little circle of the now disbanded class.

VI. THE HEART OF THE LESSON.

I. WHAT THE LESSON MEANS.

To know *what* to teach is the problem of first importance. What one teaches is of more account than how one teaches. This is true of a lesson from any book, but much more of the Bible, which is the one book of divine truth. Evil and ignorant men have taught every conceivable doctrine by wresting the Scriptures from their divine intent. The Bible has been made to bolster up every heresy by men who have abused its spirit and meaning. Because a thing is "in the Bible" does not therefore give it the sanction of the Holy Spirit. Men, angels, devils, saints, and sinners in turn are made to speak in the Bible; it is historical, and gives us the facts and the words of speakers, often without comment. The teacher's first duty, therefore, is to find out and to teach only what the Bible itself means shall be taught, what the plain intent of the day's lesson is, taking it in connection with other parts of the Bible, and in harmony with the *known general sense and spirit* of the book as a unit of divine revelation. Only the teacher who is fair-minded toward the Bible, who reads it much and prayerfully, and "goes

through it" book by book, will get at this true understanding of the spiritual intent of a particular lesson. Such wisdom to know what the lesson truly means is the immediate gift of the Holy Spirit to the candid and devout teacher. It is a matter between one's own heart and God, and the "helps," however learned, cannot impart it. It is the Holy Spirit who "takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us."

II. THE LITERAL AND THE SPIRITUAL.

In getting at the lesson's meaning, the following hints may be helpful:

1. First, try to distinguish clearly what is literal and what is spiritual. Nearly every lesson involves persons, places, events of history, biography, certain things pertaining to a remote past. These are the literal things of the lesson. In themselves they may be of little or much account, usually the former. Behind these sayings and doings of an ancient time there are always present in a Bible lesson—sometimes plain to the view, at other times hidden except to the finer spiritual sense; sometimes discoverable with little thought, at other times revealed as a flash after patient and prayerful meditation—certain spiritual truths which the Bible intends for "instruction in righteousness," for reproof, and guidance. The Bible cares for these, and for

these only. Its men and women, cities, nations, temples, warriors and battles, the mere historic happenings which it narrates, are but scaffolding, a means to an end. It is not history or biography, but the truth as revealed in Christ, that the Bible seeks through us to teach. There is to every lesson a lower literal side, which may serve as a help to our teaching; and a higher spiritual side, which must be the end of our teaching. If Sunday school teaching means anything, it means that the literal things, the geography, history, and biography, the sayings and doings of nations or individuals, are but stone and mortar and timber that enter into the temple as a part or foundation for it, but are not in themselves the building of truth we should enter and worship in with our Sunday school scholars. In every lesson there is the outer husk of the literal; there is also the inner food for the nourishment of the soul. Breaking the husk comes first in the order of teaching; but the teacher must not seek to satisfy his class with the husk, and leave the precious food within unused. To know and to use the husk in order to get at the food; to feed this to the scholars—is the supreme end of Sunday school teaching.

2. Take care, therefore, to give *prominence to the spiritual* in the lesson. The literal has its place and time, because the Holy Spirit has seen

fit thus to envelop the spiritual in the literal. That teaching is therefore natural and skillful which lays its foundation in the literal, and builds upon it the spiritual; but that teaching is a failure which spends its strength in mere foundation-laying. It is hard to fix a definite proportion between the literal and the spiritual in the lesson. But if the spiritual is uppermost in the mind and heart of the teacher, and is the clear-set goal of his work, the literal will serve, as it should, for the approach only, the outer court of the temple. If the teacher is living away from God, has "lost his experience," and with blurred vision of the spiritual essays to teach as duty only, literalism will be the sign of his decadence and failure. Apply this test as you read these lines, dear teacher, and ask yourself these questions: Is my teaching of the letter which killeth, or of the spirit which giveth life? Do I use the literal things of the lesson only as a scaffold to help me build up some great truth of God before my class; or am I a teacher of mere concrete things, that may give knowledge but not wisdom? Are my spiritual eyes dim, that I cannot see in the lesson the things of the Spirit? Do I spend precious time in quibbling over the color of priestly dress or fate of lost ark or value of Jewish coin? Do my boys and girls go from me with a little dull

knowledge of date or person or place, a glimpse of Bible history, added to their small stock; but with hearts untouched and consciences unaroused by contact with that inner divine message of wisdom which every lesson from God's Book should unfold?

3. Take time to *apply the spiritual* in the lesson, as far as you can possibly do this. Finding out what the spiritual is, reserving time to make it plain, is setting the arrow to the string. The arrow of truth must be aimed at the conscience, and the bow of the teacher's holy purpose must drive it to the mark. There are "joints in the harness" of every scholar. There is always in youth a penetrable conscience. If you have failed to find the tender place, and to know where to lay your finger upon the scholar's conscience, the fault is yours. You could have made sure of that much in the years you and he have been together. If you do know these things, and can aim your arrow of divine truth straight at the mark, do not fail to do it. Prayer will steady your hand, love will feather the shaft, the Holy Spirit will guide it unerringly to the mark. Every Sunday school lesson has this one great purpose: "To convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come."

VII. PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING.

THERE are certain fundamental principles of teaching. They are few and simple, and change not. The great teachers of the past used them in their day, Christ gave his sanction to them, and every successful teacher consciously or unconsciously makes use of them. To learn thoroughly a teaching principle, and to make one's self master of it by study and practice, is far better than slavish copying of methods without understanding the reason for them. Methods are the product of a principle at work. Wherever there is correct teaching, it must be in accordance with these well-defined principles, some of which are here presented in their order and relationship.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF ADAPTATION.

This applies to the *subject to be taught*, and stands first in the way of the teacher. It demands of the teacher four things:

1. That he must have a definite *teaching plan*, fixing in order the things of the lesson which are to be taught or to be omitted, as well as the method he is to employ in teaching. Its use is to determine beforehand what there is in the

lesson for his class, and to what he should give special emphasis. Such a plan ought to be thought out by the teacher of and for himself, and not be a mere copy of what he has seen in use by another.

2. The second requirement relates to the *scholar*. The teacher must know enough of the scholar, individually and particularly, to be able to fit the lesson to his special need. This applies the more urgently when it is a question of the fitness of spiritual truth. Without this knowledge, teaching the Bible is shooting arrows in the dark.

3. The third thing is to adapt the lesson to *the grade* which the teacher is teaching, and this has reference to the mind and its conditions and stage of development. The same lesson needs to be worked out in different ways, according to whether it is to be taught to a child or to a young man, to a dull class or a bright one. Like food and medicine, the amount and kind must be suited to the particular case.

4. The last application of this principle has to do with the *truth of the lesson*. There is usually one central truth in every lesson, overshadowing the others, and intended as the chief teaching of the text assigned. To seize upon this, enforce and emphasize it, and fix it securely in the mind and heart of the scholar, within the limit of

thirty minutes, is the chief adaptive work of the teacher. It takes hard study to do it, and one's own study at that. It must burn in the teacher's mind and heart first, if he would set on fire his class.

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF COÖPERATION.

After the subject-matter comes a consideration of the *teaching work*. This work, before and with the class, may be represented by a circle. The teacher's preparation and adaptation of the lesson would be one half of the circle, and the scholar's study and effort to learn would be the other half. Any failure to cooperate, on the part of teacher or scholar, would be taking away an arc of the circle and leaving it incomplete. Co-operation therefore demands:

1. That the teacher must be in *readiness of preparation* and in thorough sympathy with his work and the scholar.

2. That the scholar's attention *must be maintained* from the beginning to the end of the lesson, not by compulsion but by the skill of the teacher. Without this free, constant attention there can be no learning.

3. The coöperation of the *dull and slow scholars* of the class is to be diligently sought after, even at the expense of the bright scholars, who, in some measure, are able to take care of them.

selves. The surest test of the teacher is not how his bright scholars are learning, but how well he is succeeding with the dull ones.

4. Scholars are not to be left *a moment unemployed*, as the lack of something to do and to be thinking and working upon is the certain way of cutting the cords of attention. "Each scholar, all the time," is a good working motto for the teacher.

5. Coöperation is not to be confined to the class hour and work, which is all too small under the best of teaching, but should extend backward and forward through the week, in some form of *carefully assigned advance work* for the scholar in his home. A coöperation that depends upon a weekly contact of an hour only will accomplish little lasting good.

III. THE PRINCIPLE OF GRADATION.

This applies to the *process* through and by which the teacher leads the scholar into possession of the truth. It is the severest test of a teacher's ability. Much Sunday school teaching is chaotic, confusing to the scholar, out of range with his habits of thought, too difficult for him. He is immature, and is capable of taking only one short step at a time. The teacher assumes too much as to the scholar's mind and stock of knowledge, and the result is his discouragement

and loss of interest. It is true of most young people that they relish learning, if it is in easy reach and made simple and plain to the understanding. The mind of a child is as active as its body, and it learns something from whatever it touches. The work of the Sunday school teacher should be to take the things of the Bible, and put them in easy steps for the slow and timid feet of the young.

1. The first step in gradation is to discover *what the scholar knows*, or does not know, of the lesson in hand. This is finding out the scholar's level and making that a starting point, a most important thing in teaching.

2. The second step is to present the *concrete things* of the lesson that are nearest and most attractive to the scholar, such as the elements of time, place, biography, and history. The scholar's mind receives these concrete things before it begins to think at all. The wise teacher will therefore find first what the scholar knows that may connect with the lesson, and will then know what to set forth.

3. The next step is to draw out the *ethical and spiritual things* that come from this study of the facts. When a scholar knows something in the lesson to start with, he is stimulated to go on to the next step. This was the art of the Great Teacher. He set simple facts and stories before

his hearers, based upon things well known to them, as parables; and, locking up in these stories his spiritual truths, incited his hearers to think out their meanings.

4. The teacher must also keep in mind that a single truth well learned is better than a whole lesson skimmed over. Here is the mistake of many teachers. They attempt to teach too much, and, in essaying to do this, they teach nothing. Quintilian's maxim is timely: "Not what I may remember constitutes learning, but what I cannot forget."

5. The summing up of the principle of gradation is the connecting of each successive step with those preceding, and especially the taking of no step forward until one is sure that what has been passed over is understood. Teaching like this will cause the teacher to move slowly, and to leave out unimportant details; but it will quicken interest and study in one's scholars, and set before them the only standard of true learning—*to learn everything thoroughly.*

IV. THE PRINCIPLE OF REPETITION.

This was the favorite working principle of the Jesuit teachers, who did much to revolutionize educational methods. It was said of the youth who were subjects of their teaching that "the Jesuit left his mark for life upon every child

he had taught." The principle is older than the Jesuit. The Bible speaks of "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." The graver's tool must strike often if it is to cut deep. There is no fact more apparent to the experienced teacher than the necessity for repetition, in order to fix the truth in the mind of the child. Memory will catch a truth quickly, and hold it for a time; but it passes away unless the oft-repeated stroke of the teacher sinks it deeply. It is as true of the understanding as of the memory, that a thing is not truly apprehended until it has often passed before the child's mind. Every time it thus passes it grows plainer. If there is one principle more honored in the breach than in the observance, it is this one of repeating the truths of our Sunday school teaching. Quarterly reviews and attempts at written examinations attest this statement. Let the average superintendent try to call out from his school the teachings of the past month, and his cheek will flush with the sense of failure. Five points are involved in this principle:

1. That the mind and heart do not retain what comes from few and slight impressions.
2. That scholars, if wisely led, like to travel over and over the same truths.
3. That a little definite knowledge that can be instantly used is both a joy and a power to the

Sunday school scholar, but a mass of imperfectly learned truth is a pain and a hindrance.

4. That no Sunday school teacher should begin a lesson without reviewing carefully the preceding one, nor close a lesson without calling up from his scholars a summary of its chief points.

5. That the Sunday school teacher who neglects this old-fashioned principle, however showy his work may seem, is turning out scholars who have really learned nothing of permanent value.

VIII. TEACHING POINTS.

I. AS TO MANNER.

Be *natural*. Do not wear your "photograph smile" before the class. The scholars know what is natural and what is forced.

Be *friendly*. "Whoso would have friends must show himself friendly." Your manner will make or unmake friends.

Be *cheerful*. Leave headache and heartache at home, as far as possible. You have no right to overcloud the optimism of childhood with personal sorrows and vexations.

Be *cordial*. Many boys and girls come to Sunday school from homes of scant courtesy. The teacher's hearty hand shake and welcome will win the heart all the more because of lack of consideration at home.

Be *tender*. If you could know all the heartaches of the scholars, you would need no such admonition. Children have troubles as real as our own, and a little tenderness goes a long way with them.

Be *patient*. To be patient is to suffer, for that is the meaning of the word. The last place for fretfulness or irritability is before a Sunday

school class. Do not see or hear things of a worrying kind. Look beyond them to a better day. Make up your mind to suffer, which is the sure road to patience.

Use your *eyes*. If you are a slave to the "help habit," referring constantly to the teaching helps while teaching, break your fetters and teach eye to eye. A well-aimed eye has hypnotic power. Look the scholars squarely in the face as you teach, and make them feel that the teacher's eye sees every motion of mind or body.

Be *serious*. The Sunday school hour is not a time for jokes and pleasantries. Brightness, gladness, a smile, a pleasant word, are in place; but not laughter nor levity. Nor is gossip or mere chitchat in order. The laughter and loose tongue of one who is dealing with young souls is like the "crackling of thorns under a pot."

II. AS TO INTEREST.

Come early to place, before inattention gets a footing. The teacher ought to be in his seat fully fifteen minutes before the session begins, to put things in order, distribute song books and Bibles, to engage the earlier comers, to preoccupy the ground socially and mentally. Enough restlessness and mischief may be generated in the first idle minutes of the belated teacher's hour to spoil a day's work. The battle is

won or lost in the five minutes before and after the superintendent's signal bell.

Set the scholars at work as quickly as possible. Give them Bible texts bearing upon the lesson to look up. Have them to find the lesson place in their Bibles. Make up the day's report of absentees, offerings, etc., with their help. If they must talk, let the teacher lead and control the talking, and turn it to good account for the day's work.

Resolve to *have attention*, and then set to work to carry out the resolve. A firm will to have it will go far toward securing it. Scholars are quick to gauge a teacher's mettle, and to take color from his strength or weakness. A steady eye, a cool head, a still tongue, a firm hand of control, will be contagious.

Have a plan, and follow it. Plan each step of the day's work beforehand. Have in mind especially the class disturbers, and allow no opportunity for them to get in the lead. Plan the lesson study for them; know what and how much you intend to review of last Sunday's lesson. Select the texts that will set in order the "connecting links," and have the scholars turn to them. Make a list of the obscure words and allusions of the day's lesson, and set the class at work upon them. Have questions ready in mind or on paper, simple and

direct; and plan in advance what scholars shall answer them.

Arrest inattention the moment it begins. A look, a touch of the hand, a quick question, an instant use of the inattentive scholar in any way whatever, will bring him back into line. Silence for a moment, without a look or word to indicate why you are silent, will prove an effective device.

Make the scholars think. Give them time to do their thinking. Do not hurry from one point to another. Much inattention comes from mental indigestion. Set a question before the class within their capacity, and encourage and stimulate their thinking upon it.

Take pains to make plain. Once get a boy or girl to see a new idea plainly, and to know it clearly, and you will not be troubled by his lack of interest. Taking verse by verse the lesson, and making each verse so plain that the scholar can put it into his own language, is fine Bible teaching. If only one thing in the lesson for a Sunday is set in clear light in the scholar's mind, he will become a help to your teaching.

Shun routine teaching. Never go in routine order around your class. Put each scholar on his mettle by surprising him. Let the one lacking in interest bear the heavier burden of questioning and work. Ply him with special tasks, and he will soon take the hint.

Do not *fret* over inattention. If you fail to get it, say nothing and keep on trying. Fretting is a sure note of defeat, and an invitation to greater inattention. Better disorder than irritability.

Rest your class from time to time by a story or a picture or some illustrative object. If only a word or a crude picture on class slate or paper, the act of putting it before the eyes of the class will banish restlessness and regain attention. Let it tell upon the lesson.

Commend the attentive. Do this sparingly, and be sure it is specially deserved. Unmerited compliments soon nauseate, but a timely word of approval may win hearty coöperation from one on whom it is wisely bestowed.

Discourage the "smart" scholars. There are some of these in every class. They are quicker mentally, or have better home help, and are apt to take the lead of the class. They grow pert, while the dull ones grow duller. Give them the hard work of the lesson, but do not let them monopolize it. Draw out the dull scholars. Find something in range for them to do.

III. AS TO TEACHING.

Do not teach *too much*. One or two good points will be enough for the day.

Do not stress the *unimportant things*. Merely

glance at them and pass on. Make the geography, history, customs, etc., a means to an end. Do not waste the hour on nonessentials.

Do not have the lesson "read round." It is a waste of time and a bar to attention.

Test *home study*. Expect it, insist upon it, question upon it, assign advance tasks that will secure it.

Stick to the *lesson text*. Have it always before the eye. Have it read directly from the Bible. Take care as to its hard and strange words. Form the habit in your scholars of noting what the Bible says, word for word.

Do not tell the scholar what he already knows or ought to know. Make him tell it to you. Draw out his knowledge, and repress your own until needed.

Encourage questioning if along the line of the lesson, but discourage mere discussion. Decide doubtful points with authority, and pass on.

Never ask questions that answer themselves. Make your questions simple, direct, incisive, so that they cannot be answered without thought.

Gather up the threads. Before the lesson ends, review its strong points, and set it in order as you would have it carried home. Take time to do this.

Make a personal application. Never close

without it. The lesson has a saving truth in it, or a truth that edifies and makes for character. Prove what this is both in mind and life yourself. Be sure to press it lovingly and prayerfully, as the one thing of the day's work.

IX. CLASS PROBLEMS.

EVERY Sunday school teacher is confronted with certain class problems which must be solved one way or another. The following are the most important of these problems:

I. THE PHYSICAL PROBLEM.

1. *Number.*—What number of scholars should the teacher have under his teaching? The answer depends upon the facilities for the work. Where all classes are massed in one room, which is commonly the case, the maximum number should be not more than ten. Beyond this are confusion, inability to hear, inattention. Where there are separate class rooms, the teacher, if a competent one, can teach as many as can be seated comfortably. The best work, however, is done in small classes, where the personal element can operate.

2. *Seating.*—After number is considered, comes the question of how to seat a class for effective work. Simple as this seems, it is the rock on which not a few split. Imagine a teacher with ten scholars arranged in one long pew, himself at one end, and mischief at work at the other, and the scene becomes a real one in some

schools. The sensible thing to do is to seat the class in two short lines, so that those farthest away can hear and see and be heard and seen by the teacher, who should place himself near the center of the class, and stand rather than sit.

3. *Quiet.*—This is first physically. Order is not only heaven's but earth's first law. The teacher's quiet manner begets quiet. A loud-voiced teacher should be declared a nuisance and abated. Sometimes the superintendent is maker of disorder. He harrows teacher and class by restless movement, more commonly by sending out secretary and treasurer among the classes. It is a mark of an incompetent superintendent or teacher who mixes noise and confusion with the hour sacred to teaching the Word of God. Rather let the teacher wait for the angel of peace to descend, if nothing more is attempted during the entire hour.

II. THE PROBLEM OF GRADING.

1. *Authority.*—Who shall have the fixing of the scholars in class, is a vital problem in a system of efficient grading. Often the whim of the scholar determines it, to the confusion and hurt of the school. The only safe way is to have a system by which classes are to be formed and scholars assigned. The authority to do this ought to be vested in superintendent and teach-

er jointly, and the scholar should stay in the class to which he has been assigned. Anything less than a reasonable plan like this introduces a lawless spirit into the school, and converts the scholars into masters rather than pupils.

2. *Age.*—The ideal theory of grading a Sunday school is upon the educational basis. Some schools have attempted this, but few have had success. The only practical method of grading, in view of the things peculiar to a Sunday school, is upon a basis of age. Like follows like. Scholars of like ages gravitate together, and are not easily separated in a school which must depend upon the power of love rather than upon authority. The consensus of many schools has made it plain that the best work is done when scholars of the same age, and consequently of the same spirit and temper, are put into the same class.

3. *Sex.*—The matter of sex enters into the question of grading. As a rule it is best to separate boys and girls, even more in a Sunday school than in a day school. Little children may be classed together without regard to sex. Boys and girls from ten years upward need to be put into separate classes. It is the "ugly age," of which every experienced teacher and parent has a well-founded fear. Young men and women, in whom are the beginnings of a mutual respect

and courtesy, may be placed together in class; but even here a wise teacher is demanded. Dame Nature has a way of playing pranks, even while holding a Bible in her lap.

4. *Conduct.*—How a scholar habitually behaves has much to do in fixing his place in class. It is a blunder to mix the good and the bad in disposition indiscriminately. One disorderly boy can wreck a class. A teacher who is capable of managing a well-disposed class may be hopelessly handicapped by having a bad scholar thrust upon him. If good conduct is dominant in a class, the mixing in of one or more disorderly ones may not harm the orderly majority; but it is better to isolate the bad, and assign to them the teacher whose tact and patience have been proved.

5. *Promotion.*—Regular, stated promotion, from class to class, from department to department, under a plan of honorable recognition, though based only on age and continuance in membership, is essential to a successful system of grading. A Sunday school that has no promotions at stated times, and no stimulus to constancy of membership, is not doing its best work.

III. THE PROBLEM OF ATTENDANCE.

1. *Tardiness.*—Tardiness is the vice of many schools. A tardy scholar or teacher harms him-

self, but he does a greater harm to the school. One reason for tardiness is the inconsiderateness of the teachers, who hold it of little account and thereby put a premium upon it. In its last analysis, it is one of the gravest evils of the Sunday school. It is a question of religion. The boy or girl brought up to tardiness in Sunday school, and encouraged in it by his teacher's indifference, will be without a fine conscience about keeping faith with others when he is grown.

2. *Irregular Attendance.*—One breeds the other. The teacher or scholar who begins with tardiness will soon not come at all, or come so fitfully as to make life a burden to the school. One day's absence from the class may break the teacher's spell over it for months. A teacher of poorest ability and crudest preparation, in constant attendance, will do more for a school than a theological professor who "comes when he feels like it."

3. *Rewards and Honors.*—These have their rightful place in the school, and will help in solving the problem of attendance. It will depend upon the extent to which they are used, and the method of use. Prize-giving is hurtful. In a Western city a school offered money and jewelry for new scholars. They came, and in a year overran the school; but in a year more the

school was a stench in the nostrils of the Church, and the scholars had gone with its money and trinkets. A prize puts the wrong motive before the scholar. A reward is something that appeals to the pride of the scholar in his good work and record. The reward should be in reach of all, and not like the prize for the fortunate few only. The "Roll of Honor" should be the limit of reward.

4. *Parental Assistance.*—This is the strongest factor in bringing about a better attendance. There is a Jewish school in New York that uses it with great power. Even the godless homes responded to the earnest appeals sent forth by this school, and no body of children and young people average higher in faithfulness and promptness of attendance. The authority and help of the father and mother are indispensable to the teacher. He can enlist it upon his side if he will seek diligently after it. It may often be had for the asking.

5. *The Power to Interest.*—After all is said and done, the problem of fine attendance goes back to the teacher's self. Has he power to interest the young? Devices, like threads under pressure, snap without this quality. Whence does the power to interest young people come? What is the price to pay for it? The answer is, by study. It takes something interesting to in-

terest. Nothing will be found like a warm heart and a full mind to draw scholars on time from the home on Sunday mornings. Horses, sheep, even hogs, know where the "feed" is to be found, and no educational devices have been needed to draw them. "The ass knoweth his master's crib." Study the lessons, think on them, fertilize them, fill mind and heart to overflowing, and boys and girls will find it out and come, and keep coming.

X. HOW TO SECURE ATTENTION.

I. ITS IMPORTANCE.

1. *Definition.*—Attention is an effort of the mind to fix itself upon a single subject of study. It means literally the “stretching forth” of the mental faculties in one particular direction, the concentration of the thinking powers upon one thing at a time. The main difference among men mentally is in the measure of ability to thus hold the mind to a subject. Dickens defines genius as “the ability to put one’s powers of thought for a required time upon one subject.”

2. *Kinds of Attention.*—There are two ways by which attention operates: spontaneously, and by self-constraint. The former is like the wind: it “bloweth where it listeth.” The will takes no control over it. It follows the lead of curiosity, and is wayward and spasmodic. Of such is the child’s attention—“pleased with a rattle and tickled with a straw.” The latter method of attention is the only rational and educational one. It makes one’s mind a servant, and holds it to its tasks by force of will. It is self-compelling and constraining, and makes attention a duty, not a diversion or passing mood. It is

slow of growth, is a creature of education, requires patient and skillful training to develop it, but is worth many times the cost. Adam Clarke's mother learned the secret of it in dealing with his boyish dullness. Thomas Edison began to acquire it when a youthful tramp telegrapher. Just now certain Sunday school writers are making a "fad" of what they call "voluntary attention." Nothing must be required; everything of study must follow the passing whim and impulse of the child. Bible sweetmeats and sugar-coated pellets of doctrine, designed to whet the appetite and to "entertain" the little ones after perverted kindergarten fashion, are to take the place of old-fashioned scriptural training of the child in the way he should go.

3. *The Habit of Attention.*—It is the formation of the habit of self-constrained attention that devolves upon the Sunday school teacher. No child is too young to begin its attainment; and no teacher, however unskilled himself, or dull and wayward his scholars, should desist from a determined effort to secure such habitual attention. The responsibility is with the teacher. If his scholars are dull and listless in Bible study, it is his, not their, fault. As vital as the breath to the body is the scholar's attention to the teacher's teaching. There can be no teaching without a mutual effort—the teacher seeking to

impart knowledge, the scholar striving mentally to lay hold upon it. The teacher's inflexible motto should be: "I must know; my scholars must heed." Where there is a will, there will be found a way.

II. THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS.

A disposition to study and to think depends upon physical conditions, especially with children and youth. These conditions are not always under the control of the teacher; but as far as practicable the comfort of Sunday school scholars must be secured. The Sunday school building of the twentieth century will solve many of the physical problems of to-day. Meantime let the teacher make note of the following aids to attention:

1. *Ventilation.*—Pure air is cheap and abundant, and impure air will dull the finest teaching. One has only to note how often flagging attention is due to this commonplace cause.

2. *Light.*—The use of dingy church basements for the children of the church, in order to spare the carpeted aisles and cushioned pews of the bright auditorium above for the big folks, is a fruitful cause of inattention. Light is as essential to the mental as to the physical comfort of the child. To save the carpets and spoil the children is not economy.

3. *The Seating.*—Much depends upon this. With one room, crowded by many classes, all being taught simultaneously, the teacher must consider the seating. In such case not more than ten scholars should constitute a class. They should be grouped about the teacher, himself in the center, eye to eye, each scholar easily hearing him, and easily seen and heard by him.

4. *Closed Books.*—Any lesson book, paper, "help," used by teacher or scholars during the class work is a nonconductor. Minds touch one another and produce the shock of attention through the eye. The teacher who fixes his eye upon the eyes of the scholars will discover one of the choicest secrets of teaching. Therefore every distracting piece of printed matter, even the Bible itself, except as the teacher may read or have a scholar read a needed verse, should be put by from the first to the last moment of the class work.

5. *Illustrative Helps.*—Nothing holds attention so well as a timely illustration. One never grows too old to be fond of stories and pictures. Anything that helps to make plain the lesson is an illustration, whether story, picture, map, outline, blackboard drawing, rude paper sketch, or object of whatever kind. The simple and familiar things are best. An illustration that takes

the mind off the truth, and leaves it thinking of the illustration, is a failure. Christ's illustrations were homely and transparent, and came from familiar objects about him. Every teacher should bring to the lesson something that will help to make plain its teachings. One noted teacher uses a class slate, upon which drawings, maps, etc., are prepared, and passes it along the class. Stories are good, pictures are better, familiar objects or experiences of daily life are best. A little ingenuity and painstaking by a teacher will gather a number of illustrations for any lesson. The simple object or story, for eye or ear, will make plain a hard truth and fix it in the memory of the class.

III. SUGGESTIVE METHODS.

As to the Teacher's Part.

1. The teacher's *thorough preparation* is his first step toward attention. The liberty and confidence which this will impart will do more than anything else to attract the scholar. Not knowing thoroughly what he is to teach, a cloud is upon him, and he is nervous and often irritable and obtuse.

2. Let the teacher *use tact* in dealing with his scholars, especially in drawing out the dull scholars and in engaging the bright ones. The way to a boy's mind is by way of his heart, and

the short cut to a boy's heart is the teacher's personal interest in him and in what he likes and dislikes.

3. The teacher must have *enthusiasm* and make use of it. Like begets like. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Boys and girls are full of life, physically and mentally. Nothing drives a class into listlessness and stupidity like the dull, leaden face and voice of a perfunctory teacher who comes to his task without energy or enthusiasm.

4. Some scholars need the bit; some, the spur. A bright scholar will need to be kept busy to hold his attention; a dull scholar will need to be led step by step. As a rule, it is more difficult to hold the quick-minded than the dull. The teacher must feel his way until he has learned to know the mental conditions of each scholar. Attention is not arrested or maintained en masse. There will be as many problems to solve as there are scholars in the class.

5. Some teachers waste time and lose opportunity to secure attention by starting tediously and haltingly into the lesson. Let not a moment be wasted. Plunge at once into the lesson. Plan the opening words to catch eye and ear. Make the best impression first. Look into the eyes of the scholars, and begin without hesitation or preface.

As to the Scholar's Part.

1. Do not have the lesson "read round," verse by verse. If necessary, begin by reading the first verse and asking questions upon it in quick succession.

2. Hold each scholar responsible for every question asked and every statement made during the lesson, as though each scholar constituted the class. Take for your class motto: "All the class, all the time."

3. Keep every scholar employed as far as possible. The minute the attention of one is flagging, give him special work to do—a question to answer, a text to read, etc.

4. Encourage the scholars who give attention. Speak a kind word or write a kind note, remarking upon it. Do this privately rather than publicly. If the class as a whole is giving attention, commend them publicly for it.

5. Give every scholar advance work the Sunday before. It will stimulate his interest and attention.

6. As attention wanes, let the teacher's interest and energy increase. It will often call back the wandering thought of the class.

7. Allow no interruptions or distractions while you are teaching. If unavoidable, stop teaching until it has passed; then begin again. Under no circumstances try to teach while the spirit of

restlessness is rife in the class. It is waste of time and effort. Change your method, introduce your illustrations, wait in silence without fretting; but resolve, by God's help and the use of every power he has given you, that you *must and will have attention*. If that is your spirit and purpose, your success is certain

XI. HOW TO QUESTION.

I. THE VALUE OF QUESTIONING

THE art of questioning underlies all successful teaching. The Great Teacher made constant use of it. The Gospels narrate how frequently he questioned his friends or his enemies. Question and counter question attended his discourses. He made plain the way for the truth, and fixed it securely in the consciences of his hearers, by questioning. He answered questions with questions, baffling the cunning of his opposers by an incisive question. So with other great teachers, ancient and modern. The method of questioning is termed "Socratic," because of its use by the famous Athenian teacher. Sunday school questioning has five uses:

1. *To Test the Scholar's Preparation.*—Every lesson should begin with this test. Whatever the scholars know of the lesson should be drawn from them by direct questioning. In no other way can their home study be so well tested or secured. If a class knows it must undergo this ordeal of questions, there will be responsive preparation in the home. It is thus that the secular teacher introduces his class work. Its

further value is in determining what the teacher is to teach. In ascertaining how much or how little the scholars know, he finds his own "point of departure."

2. *To Fix the Scholar's Attention.*—Nothing holds the youthful mind in an attitude of attention like the well-timed question of the teacher. Questions are like the antennæ of the insect: they reach out and lay hold upon the scholar's thought. The teacher who talks much and questions little has a listless class.

3. *To Stimulate the Scholar's Thought.*—Questioning awakens the mind. There is an insinuating and disturbing quality in a well-put question that provokes thought, and will not allow the mind to rest until it is answered and made plain to the understanding. There is, too, in most scholars a pride that delights itself in wrestling with and vanquishing the questions that assail it.

4. *To Review the Teachings.*—After the facts and teachings of the lesson have been brought out by the teacher, there should be questioning to test the understanding of the scholars. The surest way to fix the salient points of the lesson in the mind of the scholar is to have him *tell them back*, and questioning is the simplest and best way to set in motion this review.

5. *To Prove the Teacher's Own Work.*—The

teacher needs to do this, or he will not know how well he is teaching. The teacher's questions are one half the circle, the scholar's answers are the other half; it takes both to make the complete circle of success. If the questioning discloses an orderly understanding of the facts and teachings of the lesson, the teacher's work is proved.

II. HOW TO PREPARE QUESTIONS.

1. *Use the Lesson Text.*—Begin early in the week. Take the Bible only. Read the lesson over and over. Take the verses of the lesson, one by one, and think out simple questions as to the facts stated, the meaning of the words used, the spiritual teachings that come naturally out of the lesson.

2. *Write Out Your Questions.*—After thinking your way through the lesson, verse by verse, go back to the beginning and write down the questions that come to you, one or more upon each verse. See that they bring out the chief points in each verse and are in orderly succession. "Writing," says Lord Bacon, "maketh the exact man," and this careful and persistent method of writing down one's questions upon paper is the surest way to attain the art of questioning.

3. *Keep in Mind Your Scholars.*—The peril

of the teacher is the tendency to aim his questions above the scholar's mark. Remember the dull as well as the bright scholars, and fit your questions accordingly. Every scholar in the class, in his home life, in his social, mental, and spiritual qualities, should pass in succession before the mind of the teacher as he prepares his questions. To do this well is indeed an art, but one possible to attain and worthy of attainment.

4. *Use the Lesson Helps.*—These, by their questions and hints, will further supplement the teacher's own stock of questions. But do not slavishly use the questions in the "helps" in your preparation or class work. Your art will grow only by patient and self-dependent practice. The teacher who relies upon the questions prepared by others is David fighting in the armor of Saul. Better use the shepherd sling.

5. *Study Your Questions.*—After you have thought out what you wish your scholars to learn, and have gone through the text verse by verse, writing questions to this end, and have further enlarged your stock of questions from a study of the questions of others, take up each question in order, and see if it is simple and plain and to the point, neither too easy nor too difficult for your class. Does it help to stir the thought of the scholar and test his un-

derstanding?. Does it bear pointedly upon the great spiritual truths of the lesson, helping to set them in clearer light? If not, run your pencil through it, and retain only the approved ones. Then read your questions over and over, and think of their fitness for this or that scholar. Lastly, tear up your questions, or commit them to the scrap basket. Heed the counsel of one who was a veteran among teachers, and "shoot without a rest."

III. WRONG METHODS OF QUESTIONING.

Practice alone, as in other arts, will make perfect in the art of questioning. But there are certain errors in the use of questions to which young teachers are subject. However well prepared the questions themselves, upon the method of their *use* in the class will depend the success of the teacher; just as the modern "Winchester" in the hands of the holiday hunter is less effective than an old "flintlock" under the trained eye of a Kentucky rifleman. Some of the blundering forms of questioning are as follows:

1. *Rote Questions.*—The teacher begins at the head of his class and passes down the line of scholars in one invariable succession, putting a premium upon inattention at one end, while he is striving to arrest attention at the other end

of the class. There is small hope for the teacher who persists in this method. The questions should be a constant surprise to the class, no scholar knowing beforehand who is to be questioned.

2. *Leading Questions.*—These involve “yes” and “no” as answers, and effectually dull every edge of thought and reflection in the scholar: “Was not Solomon son of David?” “Is not Paul the apostle to the Gentiles?” Let the question suggest little to the scholar, and shape it so that the scholar and not the teacher shall do the thinking, and “carry the big end of the load.”

3. *Obscure Questions.*—These are put in ambiguous words, and confuse and perplex the scholar. “What was Peter?”, for instance, may have several different answers, and leaves the scholar in doubt as to the teacher’s intent. The habit of writing out one’s questions in advance, and carefully studying them, is the only corrective against obscurity.

4. *Repeated Questions.*—Some teachers mar their good work by repeating questions once asked, as if a second hearing of the question were better than the first. This breeds inattention. Let the question be stated once only, plainly and audibly, and await an answer without hurtful repetition. Akin to this fault is the teacher’s repeating the scholar’s answer.

5. *General Questions.*—These are the bane of much teaching, if teaching it can be called. The teacher asks his question, and leaves it to any who happen to know to answer. No one is indicated by name or sign to make an answer, and the result is usually a discordant reply from a few members of the class. The bright scholars, as a consequence, catch up the questions, while the slower ones, who most need the stimulus of questioning, are dull and silent. The right way is to first address the question to the entire class, and train them to wait until some scholar is named to make answer. Questions should be first put individually, and concert answers allowed only for the sake of emphasis and repetition. A safe rule is for the teacher to *question repeatedly every scholar in every lesson.*

XII. HOW TO REVIEW.

I. THE PURPOSE OF REVIEWS.

THE teacher's review of the lesson has several important ends in view, chief among which are:

1. *To Test the Scholar's Learning.*—This is the chief purpose. The teacher must know this by some kind of a test, and the review, oral or written, is the only practicable one. The teacher needs to know how much and how well the things taught are being learned. To assume this without testing it is to disregard the first principles of his teaching work.

2. *To Fix Securely in the Minds of the Scholars What is Understood.*—Once understood, every repetition by the scholar, like the graver's tool, cuts the truth more deeply into both understanding and memory. It is a law of the mind that it sees and holds most strongly what comes oftenest before it. This is especially true of children.

3. *To Give a Comprehensive Survey of Past Lessons.*—In the first teaching of a lesson minor details, incidents, and illustrations encumber the mind and confuse the memory. The review should omit these, and retain only the salient and strong points of the lessons, and seek to

link them together systematically. The Sunday school lessons, while based upon consecutive study, often appear disjoined and isolated. The review ought to connect these lessons as parts of a whole; otherwise they become a burden to the memory. The "law of association" must be utilized by the reviewer to place them in some form of relationship.

4. *To Stimulate the Scholar's Home Study.*—The review compels this by throwing upon the scholars the responsibility for understanding and retaining in memory what has been taught, and by thus arousing an interest in the coming lessons. Hence it is that in the secular schoolroom the class hour is often given to a review of the home studies.

5. *To Prove the Teacher's Own Work.*—This is by no means least of the ends of the review. The readiness of a class in review will be the test of the teacher's efficiency. It is a severe test, but a just one. If little is understood or remembered of all that he has taught, the failure is the teacher's and not the scholar's. It is the business of the teacher so to teach that his scholars must learn.

II. TIME FOR THE REVIEW.

1. There should be a *preview*. In the beginning of the quarter's lessons the teacher should

take time to run over the titles of the lessons, point out their connection, call attention to lessons of special importance, and arouse an interest in advance of the quarter's study. A few minutes will suffice for this, and the time will not be lost. The preview catches the attention, preoccupies the scholar's thought, and is a guidepost to better study. For the same reason and in the same way the teacher, from Sabbath to Sabbath, should give helpful hints as to the next lesson.

2. The review should *begin and attend every lesson*. The last lesson (or several recent lessons) should be briefly and rapidly called up in review. One of our most successful Sunday school teachers often spends half the class hour in thus carefully and persistently bringing up past lessons. The thoroughness of her scholars is confirmation of her wisdom.

3. The *specially hard points* of recent lessons should be held firmly in review from Sabbath to Sabbath until it is plain that the class has mastered them. Every teacher knows how hard some lessons are to teach in the few minutes of a single Sabbath. He knows, too, how easily some lessons slip into the minds of his scholars. It is here that the review should be seized upon in fixing the hard things of past Sabbaths.

4. *In summing up* a lesson the review has its

rightful place. Before closing a lesson for the day, the teacher should call up its main points in order from the scholars. The class, not the teacher, should do this summing up. The review should not degenerate into a rehearsal by the teacher, but should be a re-view (a second view) by the scholars, as proof that they understand and remember.

5. There should invariably be a *quarterly review* at the end of the quarter. No optional lesson should be allowed to take its place. The quarterly review is the long-range test of teacher and scholars, and is evidence of how much real and permanent knowledge of the Bible is being acquired. It is in view of this fact that in recent years teachers, superintendents, and lesson writers, who were once disposed to minimize the quarterly review, are now giving special attention to the best methods of utilizing it. The quarterly review, however, will prove tedious and fruitless unless it is preceded by and is based upon the teacher's reviews from Sabbath to Sabbath. A Sunday school writer has aptly said that "the quarterly review, like an apple, takes three months to ripen."

III. THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF REVIEWS.

The subject-matter of the review should include only the important things of the lessons.

Many a review breaks down with the weight of the little things imposed upon it. These little things, at the time of their teaching, were useful in bringing out the strong points of a lesson; but, like the scaffolding of a building, should be put aside when their purpose is served. A wise discrimination as to what should go into the review will require the teacher's careful thought and planning. It is a grave question whether an extempore review, except by an expert, is worth the time it takes. The following suggestions as to selection of the subject-matter for reviews are given for what they are worth. They may lead to a better plan:

1. For the primary department let the review include the *Titles* and *Golden Texts* of past lessons of the quarter, provided the little ones understand what these mean. A parrotty recitation is worth little. Children, however small, need to understand.

2. For the intermediate department include *Titles*, *Golden Texts*, and main *facts* of the lessons. The facts should include the simplest and briefest statements of the chief events.

3. In the junior (from twelve to sixteen years), include the preceding items, and add to them a brief statement of the moral and spiritual *teachings* of the lessons. Little children should give the concrete things, but boys and girls of larger

mental growth, if rightly taught, are able to pass from facts to doctrines.

4. For young men and women of the advanced classes (the senior department), include all that is required of the younger scholars, and introduce the *topical* treatment of past lessons. This means the linking together into one connected statement by the scholar of all the points in a lesson, or series of lessons, relating to one subject.

5. For the older Bible classes, a review is as necessary as for the younger. Indeed, the failing memory of age demands the more frequent repetition. But with their maturer minds and larger experiences, the review should incline the more to a study of Bible *characters* and of the great *doctrines* of God's Word. The simple facts are secondary; the teachings, ethically and spiritually, better become the maturity and seriousness of their study. The Golden Texts, however, as "the sincere milk of the word," should be required of the old as of the young. No age or advancement in study should excuse one from "hiding the word in his heart."

IV. SPECIAL HINTS.

1. Do not count time wasted if spent in review. If half the teaching be thus bestowed, there will be gain.

2. Do not cherish the conceit of believing that you can dispense with the review. It is likely that you are much in need of it.

3. Prepare for your review as carefully as you prepare for teaching the lesson. Do not trust to inspiration. Inspiration attends, but does not take the place of, hard work.

4. Find a connecting chain between the lessons of the quarter, and build your reviews upon it. It is not always easy to do, and sometimes the chain of connection is more fanciful than real; but any connection, if only a compulsory one, will help your scholars' memories.

5. Give frequent brief, spirited drills upon persons, places, texts, titles, teachings of the series of lessons. Take five minutes or more, and drill the memory rapidly in concert. The memory drill is the powder behind the ball.

6. Make up a series of written questions from time to time, and ask them of the class, checking off those not readily answered as a hint to future reviews. Better still, have a scholar make up a list of questions, and take place as reviewer.

7. Use the printed quarterly review questions. Assign them a week in advance, and have your scholars bring in answers in writing. Then grade their papers, and report to them their grades.

XIII. TEACHING LITTLE CHILDREN.

1. *Getting Ready.*—This is no small part of the primary teacher's work. Little minds, like little bodies, require more care than larger ones, and the work of preparation is half the battle. First, the *place* should be one of seclusion, as far as practicable. Curtains, blackboards, or screens will suffice where there is not a separate room. In the opening and closing exercises of the general school, the little ones should be near the superintendent, who should have the good sense to bring the songs, prayers, etc., down to their level as much as possible, and not weary them with exercises in which they cannot take part. The *classification* will depend upon the number and the ages. In most cases it is better to divide the primary department into small classes or groups under assistants, to be taught the lesson in detail, and then to mass them for review and drill. The *equipment* need not be elaborate. A small blackboard, the large weekly lesson picture to focalize attention and aid in teaching, the little lesson story cards for home study, and a child's paper, are the essentials. Those who can read should have their Bibles. The *music*,

except the motion songs and others peculiar to the department, should be the hymns of the school and church, which children can be trained to sing as well and as understandingly as the older ones. The *special exercises* of the department should be few and simple, each with a definite purpose of helpfulness. Much time that might be profitably used in teaching is taken up with showy and meaningless so-called "primary exercises."

2. *Holding Attention.*—Advising is easier than doing. The restless little bodies, the irrepressible hands and feet and tongues of the little ones, perplex the best teacher at times. Attention is to be won, not compelled; as children have not learned the use of the will in constraining attention from within, but must be led along by the skill and patience of the teacher.

3. *The Beginning.*—A right beginning is more needful with children than with adults. The opening moment of quiet, the first look, the first words, the hush of expectancy that is begotten of the teacher's reverent beginning, will set the standard of work for the day. Of all teachers, the one in charge of little children most needs to begin her work gently and quietly.

4. *The Teacher's Voice.*—It is fortunate for the primary teacher if her voice is low and sweet by nature. If not, let her take care to

train it to this end. Nothing repels attention or arouses the spirit of disorder among children more quickly than a high-pitched, rasping, "fussy" voice and manner on the part of the teacher. The quick imitativeness of childhood specially enforces this admonition.

5. *Variety.*—Monotony is fatal to primary work. A set programme is a physical and mental burden to children. In a great school, with hundreds of little ones in the primary department, are recalled the pathetic looks of the little sufferers undergoing from Sabbath to Sabbath the infliction of a cut-and-dried order of exercises and teaching from a pretentious "Primary Manual." Change the programme often. Vary the singing, shift the order, deal in surprises, let not the right hand know what the left hand doeth, if you would hold attention and interest of children. Change need not beget confusion.

6. *Illustration.*—The child's mind has two gates, "eye gate" and "ear gate." More passes through the former than through the latter, hence the need of the objective in teaching. The blackboard is indispensable, not, however, for putting on elaborate outlines and drawings. Little David needs his sling and pebbles. The simplest lines, words, and pictures, growing out from the crayon of the teacher as she stands at the board and talks, or sits with class slate or

paper before her, is what the children relish. But do not be a slave to board or map, picture or chart. Many lessons are best taught eye to eye, without objective illustration. Remember that the Bible is its own best interpreter and illustrator, and do not follow the example of those teachers who ransack libraries in order to secure "striking" illustrations for the day's lesson, or devour books on blackboard illustration to find something to catch the attention. The finest primary teacher in the land has largely won her reputation by getting her illustrations from the two sources our Lord used—the Bible and the simple things of everyday life.

7. *Using the Bible.*—No small part of the primary teacher's work is the cultivation of reverence for God's Book in the hearts of the children. To this end the Bible should be in the hand of the teacher, the lesson should be read from it to the children, and every look and word of the teacher should conspire to deepen the impression upon the little ones that it is God who speaks to them through this Book. As early as possible the children should be expected to bring their own Bibles, and the teacher should begin to train them in their use.

8. *The Story-Telling.*—To take the day's lesson, master it thoroughly, put it the form of a story, and then teach it as such to the children.

is the simple and natural method of primary teaching. But this method has its abuses. One of these is the framing of a story whose details are largely from the imagination of the teacher, and are unwarranted by the Bible original. The craving for the realistic and sensational, and the desire to play upon the emotions of the children, lie behind this tendency. Bible stories are simple and beautiful in themselves, and are already near to the speech of childhood. As far as possible the story-telling of the lesson should conform to the words and facts of the sacred Book, and the utmost accuracy of statement should be observed by the teacher.

9. *The Telling Back.*—This is as important as the first telling by the teacher, as it tests the thoroughness of her work, and is the measure of the children's learning. No lesson story should ever be told to children without the "telling back" on their part. The reason for this is twofold: it tests how well they learn, and serves to correct their misapprehensions of the lesson. How easily the children may misunderstand a Bible story, the mother and the primary teacher have often had demonstrated by an attempt to have the child reproduce it. In the telling of the story by the teacher, and in the "telling back" by the child, simplicity and avoidance of all elocutionary effect should be observed. Pri-

mary teachers with stage manners and studied art do much to cultivate the vanity and self-consciousness of children, and to turn the primary department into a Sunday school "show."

10. *Drilling the Children.*—The secret of success with many primary teachers is the constancy and painstaking of the drill. Over and over, over and over, the facts and teachings of the lesson are drilled upon, separately and in concert; the teacher first putting the truth in small portions in exact form, and then having a child here and there repeat it singly, and afterwards the full class or department in concert. Children take pleasure in a spirited drill, and only by repeated drills do they truly learn. Some lessons are harder to teach than others. In such cases give to the easy lesson of the day less time, and after it is taught go back to the hard lesson of a previous Sunday, and drill upon its difficulties. Lesson after lesson of the quarter should thus be linked together by the method of the drill.

11. *Golden Text and Title.*—To have the children commit to memory and to understand these two things of the lesson, is an essential of primary teaching. They epitomize the lesson, and hold it in condensed form. About the Golden Text especially the lesson crystallizes. But it is better to drill this into the memory of the child

after the lesson has been taught, and for the teacher, as she teaches, to bring out its meanings. Hence the wise primary teacher begins with the lesson story and ends with the Golden Text, around which the story is made to revolve again and again in the teaching.

12. *The Spiritual Things.*—The primary teacher who merely tells prettily a Bible story, and goes no farther than the concrete things of the lesson, on the assumption that little children cannot enter understandingly into spiritual truth, knows little of the childish mind and heart. Children are the special care of the Holy Ghost, who fails not, though the teacher may, to set before the child the mysteries of the kingdom. The child's spiritual intuitions are often keener than the adult's. Be not afraid to appeal to the conscience, to deal strongly with the spiritual consciousness of the child, to question it upon the things of God. But avoid another extreme, and do not wrest the lesson away from its plain and simple intent, nor thrust upon the children fanciful and far-fetched teachings "about Jesus." Every lesson, though from the Bible, has not in itself the image and person of Christ.

XIV. TEACHING BIG BOYS AND GIRLS.

By "big boys and girls" are meant those of the junior department, whose ages range from twelve to sixteen years.

The difficulties attending the teaching of this class of scholars are partly real and partly imaginary. One of these is the odium put upon them by some teachers who hold them as Ishmaelites. "Give me any class but one of big boys or girls" is not uncommonly heard. Another difficulty is in the transition stage through which these boys and girls are passing. They are no longer children, docile and trustful, and are not old enough to be addressed as "young ladies and gentlemen." They are practically nondescripts, a law unto themselves, socially and educationally. It is the perilous period of the "teens," fraught with large possibilities for good or evil.

No period in life demands greater care and tenderness than this one of big boyhood or girlhood, and at no time is character more surely formed.

I. AS TO THE TEACHER.

1. Have a care, then, what kind of teacher is set over big boys and girls, as that teacher means more for good or bad than any who come before or follow after.

2. Choose a teacher with *heart power*, especially. If one who is clear-headed and warm-hearted can be gotten, all the better; but if not, take one who has a big loving heart, who has not forgotten the days of boyhood or girlhood.

3. Whether it should be a *man or woman* to teach such scholars is of small account. Usually a man is better for boys and a woman for girls; but rather than turn them over to the tender mercies of a rasping and unsympathetic teacher, any one, without regard to sex or age, should be chosen.

4. It must be a teacher with the *mother instinct*. Men often have this, and women often have it not. It takes both the firmness of the masculine and gentleness of the feminine combined to make the best teacher for big boys and girls.

5. There is a good reason *in the nature of things* why men, as a rule, should teach the larger boys and women the larger girls. A man who has endured the trials of his own boyhood will understand those of his sex better than a woman; the same is true as to a woman teaching girls. On the other hand, the principle will hold against all challenge, either in secular or religious education, that no teaching or training is complete until it has received the impress of both sexes as teachers.

6. Whoever the teacher, the test of fitness is

that he or she shall have shown some measure of skill in the management of big boys and girls. There are such persons in every church, who, as parents or companions of big boys and girls, have made their mark upon them and are recognized by them as leaders.

II. AS TO THE TEACHING.

1. The chief thing to do with these big boys and girls in the class is to *keep them busy*. That will depend upon the teacher's painstaking in planning the work so as to engage every moment of time from beginning to ending of the lesson hour. Work, downright and constant, is the solvent of mischief.

2. Have them to *own and use their Bibles*, and allow nothing but the Bible in class work. It is the best time for teaching its practical use, as it is the time of all others for inculcating reverence for it.

3. In teaching, use mainly the method of *question and answer*. Do not lecture, or "talk about" the lesson. Such scholars have not mastered the art of thinking consecutively, and questions will be as scaffolding to carry forward their thoughts. The lecture method is out of place, as their listlessness under it will demonstrate to the observing teacher. Let the teacher think out his questions in advance, and fit them to particular schol-

ars. Vary the order by having the class to do the questioning. At all times encourage questions from the class, on the one condition that they pertain to the lesson.

4. Stick to the *text of the lesson*. Plan questions to bring out its meaning, hold the class to the very words of the Scriptures. Draw out by questions what the text contains. Refer answers to the text as the test of correctness. To thus train a class of boys or girls in the habit of careful scrutiny of the Bible text is the beginning of fruitful study.

5. Make free use of the *marginal references*. Most of these throw light upon the lesson. Train the scholars to find and utilize them in class work and home study. Assign one or more to each scholar; have them read before the class and their application explained. This has an added value in giving something to every one to do.

6. Aim especially at the *slow and dull*. Give these plenty of time. Ask of them the simplest questions. Hold back the "smart" scholars, and impress the doctrine of class rights and mutual forbearance.

7. The *round table* method is a good variation from the regular order. No set questions are asked; each is free to speak; one or more are assigned in advance to lead off with comments on

the lesson, or to suggest "points" which they have thought out; others follow briefly at will; and the teacher sums up and closes the lesson.

8. The *lyceum* method may also be used at times. If the lesson hinges upon an evenly balanced question, the teacher may turn it into the form of a set "discussion," with scholars of known views to lead, others taking sides at pleasure. Here and there are lessons which may allow such treatment, the one point to guard against being the taking of sides for the sake of mere argument.

9. If possible, secure some sort of *seclusion* in class work; if not in a class room to themselves, screen them from neighboring classes, or at least seat them in a remote corner. Teachers of big boys and girls know their tendency to become "neighborly" with other classes.

III. AS TO MANAGEMENT.

1. Never mind the animal spirits of big boys and girls. Do not become impatient over it. Nature made them so, and they are of little account without it. When the boiler is too full of steam, provide an escape valve.

2. Allow much for the transition period. Adolescence is not an evil in itself. A study of the physical conditions attendant upon big boyhood and girlhood is worth much to teachers.

3. Put proper incentives before them: the "roll of honor," the "class standing," the day of honor and recognition before the school.

4. Capture the class leaders. Find them out by watching the class, and win them as your helpers, and place them on your personal staff.

5. Have regard for the gregarious instinct. Do not try to drive the class collectively, but take your appeal to each boy or girl individually. You will succeed in this way where you have failed in trying to move the class as a body.

6. Do not put big boys and girls in the same class. Sentiment is not always sense.

7. Be thoroughly impartial. Shun favoritism. Treat rich and poor, dull and bright, alike. Allow no challenge to your absolute fairness to to all.

8. Make comrades of your scholars on the street, in the home, by fine courtesies reserved specially for them. Convince them that they are always and everywhere first in your thought.

9. Get good readable books for the class, and start a class library. Class ownership develops the class spirit, and is helpful.

10. Organize the class with class officers—a president, secretary, etc. Let them elect their officers, frame by-laws and rules of order, and learn the lesson of self-government.

11. Appoint committees—lookout, sick, visita-

tion, social, etc. Find work for these committees.

12. Have class observance of days—Christmas, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, anniversaries, etc.

13. If practicable, spend a few days every summer camping out as a class. It will pay.

14. Cultivate the parents. It helps a scholar to see that his teacher is on close terms with his father and mother.

15. Do not be afraid to talk religion, but deal privately with each as opportunity offers. If religious yourself, you cannot help talking it to those you love. Your scholars will expect it of you, and will wonder why you do not open your heart to them upon the one thing that most concerns them.

XV. TEACHING YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN.

I. THE PROBLEM OF SEX.

WHETHER there should be mixed or separate classes of young men and women will depend upon local conditions. The pleas for the former are: 1. The stimulus to study that comes from the mixing of the sexes, in arousing a spirit of desire to appear well. 2. The finer religious and moral tone of young women as a help to young men.

Per contra, those who favor separate classes maintain: 1. That young men are constrained rather than helped in study by the presence in the class of young women, who have more time for study, and therefore lead in the work of the lesson hour. 2. That mixed classes minister to the social rather than the religious and intellectual needs of members.

As a matter of fact, the classes of young people in our American Sunday schools, now widely known as having solved the problem of getting young men and women into the Sunday school, are restricted to one sex only.

II. THE PROBLEM OF A DEPARTMENT.

Whether mixed or separate as to sex, it is cer-

tain that the problem of getting young men and women into Sunday school is retarded by the promiscuous way in which they are graded. Young people who have attained their majority are classed with big boys and girls, or assigned to silence and nonentity in classes of elderly people. Age, tastes, associations, habits of thought and life are ignored. The remedy lies along the following lines:

1. Use the young men and women already in church and school to recruit other young men and women.

2. Plan the work of recruiting, assign details to those who will take part, and persist in setting before the young people of the community the need and profit of Sunday school membership.

3. Take special note of those who come. Honor them in every way possible. Smooth their way, and strengthen the bonds of affiliation.

4. Unite all classes of young people, whether mixed or separate, into a distinct department. Seat the classes together, in one part of the room, if there are not separate class rooms. If provided with class rooms, place the classes in adjoining rooms.

5. Give the department its own name. The best name is one suggested twenty years ago.

the "Young People's Assembly," or simply the "Assembly." It is better than "Senior Department," which properly applies to the older members.

6. Allow promotion to this department for all young people over sixteen years of age. Make promotion to the "Assembly" one of the special features of the year. Set a day for it, and observe the occasion appropriately.

7. Try the department plan, whether your school is large or small, in city or country. Its success does not depend upon the number of classes composing it. It follows the natural principle of putting together those who are proper yokefellows.

III. THE PROBLEM OF A CLASS SPIRIT.

A class spirit is one of the best helps toward a solution of the general problem. It is worthy of note that the "spirit" of the famous classes above mentioned is the main cause of their success. Rightly directed, the class spirit will give stimulus beyond any other influence. There are ways of developing this spirit:

1. Have a class organization. Frame a constitution and by-laws, and have the class adopt it, or let the class frame it.

2. Have a corps of class officers—a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, an

usher (if a large class), a chaplain, an executive committee.

3. Appoint standing committees; a "lookout" committee, to work for additions to the class; a "visiting" committee, to call upon members when there is need; an "absentee" committee, to keep an eye on any who are derelict in attendance; a "social" committee, to plan social functions; a "finance" committee, to foster contribution and distribution of class money; a "spiritual" committee, to work personally for the saving of unsaved members. A fine class spirit is summed up in this one admonition: give every one something to do for his class, and take care that it is done faithfully.

IV. THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING.

This is the main problem. It is not easy to teach young men and women in a way that will interest and hold them to the class. Blunders are made in the choice of a teacher; others in the method of teaching.

As to the Teacher.—1. In choosing a teacher for young men or women, the first qualification should be that of piety. To be a clean, strong Christian, with unsullied reputation, with experience in the religious life—these are indispensable.

2. Second in importance is a well-grounded

knowledge of the Bible. Not technical or scholastic knowledge is meant, but plain, home-grown knowledge that comes of searching the Scriptures. Scholastic knowledge too often sticks to the dry bones of theological systems.

3. Next in order is a sincere sympathy with young men and women. No teacher of perfunctory spirit should ever be called to teach young people.

As a rule, if the classes are separate as to sex, a man is better for young men as teacher, and a woman for young women. If mixed classes, some of the objections to mixing, as noted above, may be met by putting a man to teach. Young men will then take readier part, while young women will not suffer loss.

1. *As to Methods.*—1. Do not question much, at least to the extent of embarrassing slower members.

2. Allow free discussion along the lesson's lines, within the bounds of time. Young people have opinions, and desire to express them.

3. Do not assume to be an encyclopedia of Bible learning. Frankly admit ignorance, and thus hold respect. Ask for time in which to meet demands, and lay yourself out to find what is wanted.

4. Use the topical and lecture methods. Assign topics or subjects from the lesson in ad-

vance, giving every member in turn something to do at home. Hear what they have to say upon the assigned subjects, and spend the remainder of the hour in presenting the truths of the lesson.

5. Take pains to base all teachings upon the Bible, and do not set up your own beliefs as a standard of truth. Sticking close to the inspired text, drawing your evidences from it, will beget a habit of Bible-searching in young people, and do much to dispel the critical mood that often besets them.

6. Be patient especially with the "bad young man." If anything needs to be said in admonition, let it be done in privacy and tenderness. Remember that young men often appear worse than they really are. It is "put on," and is more for effect than an evidence of real badness.

7. Cultivate an unflinching optimism in dealing with young people. They have come to an age when you cannot drive or easily lead them. They are quick to detect if the teacher has lost confidence in them; but as long as they are sure you trust them and have faith in saving them, you cannot fail as their teacher.

XVI. TEACHING ADULT SCHOLARS.

MANY Sunday schools are giving emphasis to the attendance of the older people. Within a few years, a number of "adult departments" have demonstrated the practicability of securing adult attendance and interest in Bible study. Two reasons should be urged for such departments:

1. The average man or woman needs regular and systematic Bible study, as a "means of grace." The tendency of a busy life is to neglect such study in the home and on week days, which makes it the more imperative that it be done on the Sabbath, when secular work does not obtrude.

2. Attendance of the adults upon the Sunday school is needed for the sake of example. The young men and women of the church and community will not easily be led to attend the Sunday school until it has the dignity and prestige an adult department will give to it. The "young man" problem, so often under discussion, will be solved by the presence in the school of the fathers and mothers.

I. THE ADULT DEPARTMENT.

1. Give the department its own place. Scat-

tering its classes throughout a building, and calling it a "department," will not make it one. The department feeling must be cultivated, which will be done by massing it, giving it place and title of honor distinctively, and making much of it. A stimulus will thus be given to scholars of the under grades to work up by promotion into it.

2. On the other hand, do not allow the adult department to overshadow the school. This is done by setting the standards of study, review, general exercises, and platform talks above the range of children and youth. Aim at all classes and ages in the general work of the school.

3. Keep extremes apart. Do not put into the same class of the adult department extremes in age, tastes, and habits. Put married people and old people in classes to themselves. Let each be with his fellows. Comradeship should rule in classifying. Each should be where he will feel most at ease, and be free to speak without fear of disclosing ignorance.

4. Do not draw upon the adult department for substitute teachers. Make provision for such supply in the way of a teacher's training class. A superintendent should not urge adult scholars to take charge of class work for which they are not prepared, and to avoid which they cease to attend.

5. Look to the adult department for a good example in all things, in attending promptly and regularly, in taking hearty part in the general exercises, in good order, in genuine loyalty to the school. To allow a double standard in the school, one for children and youth, another for older scholars, seriously impairs good government. The older the scholars, the more readily they should respond to the rule of the chief.

II. TEACHING ADULTS.

1. Give the classes the best teachers you can command. One who has tact, firmness, and patience will usually succeed with a class of adults. Older scholars need leadership rather than teaching. They have come to think for themselves, and to hold convictions upon Bible matters. The leader who simply "draws them out," and guides them through the lesson, will prove acceptable.

2. Use the colloquial method. Adult scholars are often driven away for fear of being cross-examined upon the day's lesson. As a rule, such scholars do a minimum of home study, and rely upon their general knowledge of the Bible, which makes them the more sensitive to direct questioning.

3. Use Bibles only in the adult classes, however much this is abated in other departments.

Adult classes are controversial, and it is well to hold them to the Bible as an end of controversy.

4. Do not allow a monopoly by the two or three who happen to be the most knowing. Give every member of the class opportunity to speak his mind upon the lesson. But leave each free to speak or to be silent without sense of failure.

5. Do not become controversial as the teacher. If a wrong opinion prevails, set over against it your own in few words, and pass to the next point. Especially keep out "isms." Take the lesson in hand, press it upon the class, stick to the Bible, and put aside every attempt to exploit "cranky" opinions.

III. TWO EXAMPLES.

Two notable examples among many take prominence in illustrating the possibilities of an adult department. One is in the North, the other in the South.

The "O'Hanlon Bible Class," of Ocean Grove, N. J., is an evidence of how people find a charm in free and unconventional study of the Bible. This class is the "adult department" of a school which meets at 3 P.M. on the Sabbath, during the seashore season from May to October. Dr. O'Hanlon, President of the Pennington Academy, is a genial, well-rounded, con-

servative leader. Three thousand persons are often to be found in his class. For an hour they are held closely to study of the freest colloquial kind. The International lessons are used. A part of the hour, at opening, is given to general questions from the class, in writing or orally, upon matters of Bible interest. The range of these questions is wide, and often extends to secular questions growing out of Bible teachings. The leader answers the questions, or calls for volunteer answers, correcting and directing at his pleasure. Then follows his statement of the greater teachings of the regular lesson of the day, to which additions are made by volunteers. The study is free, hearty, spirited, but always held firmly in bounds. "Cranks" are not tolerated.

The other adult department is that of Trinity Methodist Sunday School, Atlanta, Ga. Witham's "Busy People's Class," as recently observed, is a great adult class, conducted after a unique way. The finest preparation is made by the leader upon the day's lesson; an appointed "reader," standing before the class, reads verse by verse; the text is first made plain, then illustrated and enforced by Mr. Witham with rare skill. The lecture method obtains. No direct questioning is done by the leader. As with the O'Hanlon class, questions from members are en-

couraged and answered. Volunteer "points" are called for, and visitors of distinction are occasionally used to assist the leader. The utmost freedom from embarrassment and conventional-ity is the rule.

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XVII. THE TEACHER'S TRAINING WORK.

TRAINING one's scholars is more difficult than teaching them. It is putting into practice the lessons taught. The difference is that between planting the seed and caring for the plant until it comes to maturity. A Bible doctrine may be taught in a day, but working it out in the life is a slow and difficult labor of years. Teaching gives knowledge; training makes character. The teacher's best work is along the lines of training. The day school teacher's objective is good citizenship; the Sunday school teacher's is Christian character. The latter goes beyond the former in training for the home, the church, and the state, for both secular and religious uses, for the life that is and the life to come. It is a noble and far-reaching work, an opportunity and responsibility unsurpassed. It was said of Dr. Thomas Arnold, of Rugby, that he "left his mark upon every Rugby boy." His methods, as disclosed in "Tom Brown's School Days at Rugby," show how thoroughly he individualized his great school and trained each boy for whatever was best in him. So the wise Sunday school teacher must study the temper and disposition of his scholars, and find along what lines of train-

ing his work should proceed. Here are some of the things to be included in his training work:

1. *Christian Habits.*—Training forms, rather than reforms. Forming safe habits is the practical work of the Sunday school. There is the habit of prayer, both private and public; of pure speech and living; of respect for the aged and infirm; of courtesy to inferiors; of kindness to brutes. There are habits of good and wholesome reading, of honor to parents, of Sabbath-keeping, of helpfulness and almsgiving. A habit, good or bad, is the resultant of an act indefinitely repeated until it becomes constant and involuntary. A Christian habit is one patterned after the example or commandments of Christ.

2. *Christian Service.*—The present has been fittingly called the “era of young people.” Young people’s societies have multiplied, and the church is calling them into all forms of service. The Sunday school is a better training place for Christian service than the Endeavor or League society, for the reason that it begins its training earlier, and employs the methods of the school. It was the neglect, indeed, by the Sunday school of this training function that gave rise to the young people’s societies. It is by this training work of the school that the church must grow a crop of serviceable young Chris-

tians. One small school by such training within a few years has supplied seven missionaries and preachers. Another school provides the greater part of the prayer meeting congregation, as a result of training its membership to attend en masse. Yet another Sunday school utilizes a score or more of its boys and girls as home department messengers. House-to-house visitation, caring for the sick, finding out the destitute, looking up absent ones, assisting pastor and superintendent in clerical and other ways, are some of the forms of service in which scholars may be trained.

3. *Church Attendance.*—The school's first duty in the matter of attendance is to the church rather than to itself. The school is for the church, not the church for the school. The preaching service, in the light of Scripture or reason, has higher claim upon childhood and youth than the school. Parent, pastor, and teacher should unite in securing the presence of the entire school at the Sabbath morning preaching service. The teacher should set a good example of attendance, and urge it upon his class. He should keep a record of the church attendance of his scholars, and talk with them about the church, its pastor, the duty and privilege of public worship. He should counsel with the pastor as to such attendance,

and seek to bring the pastor and the scholars closer together.

4. *Church Loyalty.*—There is a kind of church loyalty whose roots are ignorance and bigotry. True loyalty is intelligent and catholic; devoted to one's own church, because it knows and believes thoroughly its doctrine, yet honoring all other churches for the good it sees in them. Such loyalty manifests itself by firm adherence to the church's peculiar doctrines, faithfulness to one's pastor, obedience to church rules, generous support of its ministries, ready and hearty service in its behalf. The Sunday school teacher is doing a great work when he thus trains his scholars.

5. *Systematic Giving.*—The liberal church is the product of home and Sunday school training. The generous givers of the church are those who have been taught in childhood to give from principle and with system. Scriptural giving is never spasmodic or emotional, but constant and by rule. Sunday school scholars can easily be trained to give cheerfully and systematically. The teacher should have a plan or system for his class, not a competitive one with honors for the largest giver, which is unscriptural, but a system based upon regular and intelligent giving, as a duty to God and the church. Prize banners, class rivalries, any motive of mere com

petition, should not be allowed. The scholar should be trained to give as an obligation of stewardship, an act of worship. His acts of giving, rather than the amounts he gives, should be recorded by his teacher and included in the reports of the school.

6. *Helpful Reading.*—Good books and papers are vital to good character in the young. A well-chosen and well-managed library is the teacher's best auxiliary. What his scholars read between Sabbaths most seriously affects the teacher's work. A clean helpful book in the hands of the scholar reënforces the teacher at every point. Recent experiments in secular and religious education have shown conclusively that the beginnings of youthful viciousness are largely and directly traceable to bad books. The reading habit grows quickly upon our boys and girls, and can be turned to good account. The easy tendency is toward books of fiction, which usually are hurtful to mind and heart. With hundreds of good, strong books, fitted especially to the temper and tastes of boys and girls, books of history, biography, travel, popular science, etc., there is abundant material at hand with which to train one's scholars in ways of helpful reading. Nor is the excuse well founded that charges upon children and youth an aversion to such books.

7. *Reverence.*—Our American youth particularly need training in reverence. Makers of our own laws and rulers, freer than any people and boastful of our freedom, we are losing much of the reverent spirit of the fathers of the republic. To the credit of our schools, our boys and girls hold some things in reverence. There is reverence for the Bible, for great men, for the flag. There is wanting a reverence for the Sabbath, the house of God, for the home, for law and order, for personal faith and honor. Our youth need the Sunday school teacher's care in these respects. Their liberty, unrestrained by parental authority or moral sentiment, is converted into license. Nothing can compensate for the lack of a reverent spirit in youth. To train a boy to deport himself as a gentleman in all places, especially in the church; to respect the law and its officers, great and small; to cherish a pride in keeping faith and honor in all things—is better than the mere teaching of lessons. The Sunday school has the advantage over the day school in this training. True reverence is founded in fear of God, and is directed by a Christian conscience. Reverence is but another name for religion, and the Sunday school teacher, by virtue of his office, is a religious trainer.

XVIII. THE TEACHER'S WEEK DAY WORK.

OVER against the one hour of the Sunday school session, in helpfulness or hindrance, is set the entire week. Considering the forces that array themselves against the teacher's work—the neglectful Christian parent, the godless home with its positively evil training, the temptations that early beset our boys and girls, the vices of the street open before them, the evil companions who ensnare them, the bad books and papers in easy reach—it is a wonder that the Sunday school, with its small fraction of time, is doing so much genuine and permanent good. But for the fact that its ministries are of heaven rather than of earth, and that they bind together the sacred influences of the Lord's day and Book and house, the teacher might well lose heart in his work. If, added to these Sabbath influences, there can be found time by the teacher for a week day work that will help to counteract the evil and reënforce the good, it will often turn defeat into victory. Much time or effort is not demanded. Sunday school teachers are busy people, and cannot always measure up to the standards set for them. But with the busiest teacher there should be time for a few things

that will help his scholars to fight the hard battle of temptation that comes from their week day living.

Some of the things the teacher can include in this work of the week are suggested:

1. He can study the *home conditions* of his scholars, and therein find the key to their better management in the class.

2. He can arrest *absenteeism* before it becomes chronic and incurable.

3. He can assist and encourage the *home study* of the scholars, and thus find the key to their teaching in the class.

4. He can take counsel *with the parents*, and secure coöperation with his plans.

5. He can strengthen the bonds of *personal friendship* between his scholars and himself, and thereby gain their affection and confidence.

I. STUDYING THE SCHOLAR.

The teacher, at best, can gain only a general knowledge of his scholars from contact with them in class. The real personality of a scholar rarely discloses itself when massed with other scholars. The boy collective is not the boy individual. A full knowledge of the scholar must be sought from the mother, the day school teacher, his "chums." The company he keeps wi' be the clew to his habits. The books

and papers he reads will disclose his bent of mind. His day school teacher knows much as to his social and moral disposition, his strong and weak points of character. He can give valuable hints as to his management. His mother knows him best of all in the light of the home, which is his severest test. Though she is partisan by nature, she is often his truest critic. If the Sunday school teacher can take time to study the scholar under these varying conditions, the knowledge he will acquire will be invaluable in his managing and teaching.

II. ARRESTING ABSENTEEISM.

The church, especially the Sunday school, loses much of its strength by way of leakage and drift. Absenteeism at first is fitful, but, if neglected, soon becomes chronic, and then permanent. Its best preventive is the teacher's week day visitation. Other devices used in Sunday school—such as class records, rewards, rolls of honor—are helpful, but do not compare in value with personal visitation. Sometimes a message or note through the mail will suffice, but the adage applies here: "If you would have something done badly, send another; if well, go yourself." A bad habit forms slowly, and its power is easily broken at first. One visit of the teacher may arrest it, as personal

contact and importunity are hard to resist. Find out the reason for absence. It may be in the scholar; it may be in the teacher himself. In either case it is worth finding out. Visitation by the teacher, or by some one from class or school, should tread close upon the heels of every absence. One of the great Sunday schools of our country started years ago with less than two hundred scholars; it now enrolls nearly one thousand. Its large growth is chiefly due to two methods: it adds new members by house-to-house visitation, and holds its old members by the insistent visits of its teachers. Each Sabbath's absentees are reported by the teacher to the superintendent, and the teacher pledges himself, if possible, to visit the absent ones during the coming week.

II. HELPING HOME STUDY.

Few scholars have home help in lesson study. The Christian home neglects to help; the non-Christian home cares little about it. The scholar is urged in the class to "study at home," tries to do it, does not know clearly what is meant by it, or what the teacher's standard of "study" may be, and, after a few discouraging efforts, ceases to try. Here is the teacher's opportunity. A few minutes of his week day time spent by the scholar's side in his home, as friend

with friend, showing him how to study his lessons, how to use the lesson leaf with his Bible, and to make the most of both, will give the scholar the needed clew, and possibly form within him the beginning of a habit of home study. The trouble with most boys and girls is not so much an indisposition to study the Bible lesson as it is in not knowing how and to what extent it should be studied. The requirement of the day school for home study is easily submitted to, but the day school teacher wisely sets a definite task, and trains in methods of study. One by one, by the expenditure of a little effort, the scholars of a Sunday school class may thus be reached and started upon a better way. It is the personal visit and help of the teacher that counts, and such visitation is worth all the copyrighted study schemes on the market.

IV. WINNING THE PARENTS.

This is the "ounce of prevention" that is worth a "pound of cure." In secular education the rod, once so vigorously applied as a panacea for all ills, lies dust-covered on the shelf, and the secular teacher has found a surer remedy in parental coöperation. The Sunday school teacher may learn much from the example of the secular teacher. His friendly visits to parents, his frank talks with them over the doings or

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misdoings of his scholars, his appeal for co-operation in managing and teaching them, will be his most profitable week day work. It anticipates and forestalls trouble; it wins the parents in advance of it; it harmonizes the plans and purposes of the school and of the home. The Sunday school needs the help of the home even more than the day school. If the scholar is a chronic absentee, if he is a disturber in the class, if he neglects the study of the lessons, the corrective is a prompt visit to the home, and a kind word with the father and mother. The visit must not be for the purpose of rehearsing the grievances of the teacher or the faults of the scholar. Touch lightly, if at all, on these; but ask help for the future. Lay your plans for the good of the child frankly before the parents; show them that you seek his welfare only; take counsel with them heartily over the work you are trying to do, and prove to them the genuineness of interest you feel in the success of your class. Teachers who have taught long and successfully have learned to mark with a white stone in the calendar the days devoted to home counsel with parents.

IV. THE SCHOLAR'S FRIENDSHIP.

This is the social end of the teacher's work. If he can win the friendship of his scholars, his teaching and managing will be a labor of love.

He will no longer need devices and methods. The foundation of such friendship may be laid in the work of the Sabbath, but the week day contact and fellowship must develop and perfect it. A look of the eye, a touch of the hand, a gracious word and greeting at every chance meeting of teacher with scholar, a manifestation of pride and confidence in him at public gatherings; inviting him to one's home as guest of honor; remembering his birthdays and other days of personal interest; sharing his troubles and cheering him on in his successes—in short, a constant and sincere interest in whatever concerns him, on week day or Sabbath, will make him a true and faithful friend. Few friendships in life are as unselfish or lasting. One who has become famous as a Sunday school teacher recently said: "I have taught many years, and have had much to do with troublesome and bad boys and girls. The one method I used more than all others was *comradeship*. In the home, at ball and bat, by the creek side, on the hunt, in the social gatherings, the worse the scholar the more I distinguished him and made him my companion. As comradeship without grew closer, the more docile and thoughtful became the bad boy in the class. The castle of a bad boy's life is not taken by storming it, but by entering it as a guest."

XIX. THE TEACHERS MEETING.

I. ITS PURPOSE.

THE purpose of the teachers' meeting is four-fold:

1. To *stimulate study of the Bible*. This is needed because of a tendency among teachers to depend too much upon "helps" and too little upon original study.

2. To unify and *plan the lesson teaching*. Teachers in the same school, with the same lesson, sometimes teach wide of the mark, and make prominent the unimportant things of a lesson.

3. To *help the younger teachers*, most of whom have no other opportunity of learning how to study and teach.

4. To use the corps of officers and teachers as *a business council*, in which the needs of the school may be discussed and its work planned. The teachers' meeting is the one place in which the judgment and coöperation of the teachers may be secured.

II. ITS MEMBERSHIP.

1. The pastor should be a constant attendant. As "overseer of the church" he needs, for the

church's sake as well as his own, to keep in touch with his teachers. He ought not to lead the meeting.

2. The superintendent and his officers are bound by their obligations of office to attend. The superintendent is *ex-officio* chairman, and should preside over the meeting and direct its work.

3. The teachers are the chief beneficiaries of the teachers' meeting, and, if not providentially hindered, are without excuse for non-attendance. The older and more experienced the teacher, the more he is under obligation to serve the teachers' meeting. On being appointed to a class in a Sunday school, every teacher should be brought before the altar of the church, and publicly pledged to attend the teachers' meeting.

4. In addition to the regular teachers of the school, those who are being used as supply teachers and members of the normal class, together with such older scholars as may be called in future to serve as officers or teachers of the school, should be urged to attend. Contact with the regular teachers in a meeting for study will often stimulate these to prepare for teaching.

III. THE PROGRAMME.

The time and place, though of minor importance, are to be considered. The best time for a teachers' meeting is on Monday night, or at a

time near to the beginning of the week, in order to begin the lesson study as early as practicable. The place should be the coziest church room; if there is not one, then the home of a member, cheery and central. The teachers' meeting should have the brightest setting possible.

The programme should be frequently varied. Heavy theological discussion, or elaboration of little things of Bible study, should alike be tabooed. Every teacher should be drawn out at every session. The leader should lead the meeting, talk little himself, and allow none to monopolize the time. Two things should be made prominent and clear at every meeting: "What is there in the lesson that should be taught?" and "How shall this be taught to the several classes?"

A well-rounded programme for a teachers' meeting might profitably include four distinct features: the social, the devotional, the business, and the educational. The social instinct in Sunday school workers needs conserving. It is not only a good foundation and introduction to the other more important work of the meeting, but it has in itself a drawing power, and will often tempt indifferent teachers to attend. Prefacing the regular session with a social half hour, supplementing this when practicable by a "teachers' lunch," which allows business men especial

ly to come straight from office to meeting, will develop a finer fellowship, relieve monotony, and enhance the real work of the session. A member of a successful teachers' meeting recently declared that, "after repeated failures, a little small talk and tea was found to be the one missing link."

After the social should follow the devotional, in a little time devoted to the spiritual life and needs of the teachers. Bible study at times degenerates into routine and professionalism. The best preparation of the mind is by way of the heart. To "warm the heart and clear the head" is the purpose of this short season of devotion, of which the keynote is the teacher's own experience of the things of God, as taught by way of the current lessons to his class. The leadership devotionally may be alternated among the teachers.

After the devotional comes the business of the school, superintendent and teachers constituting "the cabinet." Every interest of the school should be considered in turn. Problems of grading, of music, of supply of teachers, of home class, and other department work, whatever makes for the failure or success of the school, should pass in review before the body of teachers, and their judgment and united action should be secured.

After the business is the lesson study, the most important work of the meeting. The following are two suggestive programmes, each one hour and a half in length:

No. 1.

Social Half Hour.

Devotional Service, ten minutes.

Business Council, ten minutes.

The Lesson Study, forty minutes, as follows:

1. Connecting Links.
2. Difficulties of the Text.
3. Differences of Versions.
4. Parallel Accounts of the Same Lesson.
5. Main Points to Be Taught (each teacher's analysis).
6. Illustrations to Be Used in Teaching.
7. Adaptation of Lesson (each teacher's judgment).

No. 2.

Social Half Hour.

Devotional Service, ten minutes.

Normal Study (in course), twenty minutes.

The Lesson Study, thirty minutes, as outlined in No. 1.

The latter programme suggests a practical combination of the teachers' meeting and the normal or training class, by abridging the time of the

social half hour and the lesson study enough to devote twenty minutes to a teacher-training course. The time thus used should be given not so much to study of the training course as to a brief review of such studies in the home.

IV. THE TEACHERS' COUNCIL.

The fact that there are so few teachers' meetings where there should be so many, and that few of these have been truly successful, makes it imperative for the teachers to have an alternative plan for coming together. If a weekly teachers' meeting is out of the question, or if only a minority of the teachers can attend it, a monthly "*Teachers' Council*," combining in brief the several features of the teachers' meeting above indicated, is suggested as a compromise. The necessity for Sunday school teachers to hold stated meetings for study and conference warrants a compromise. The name "council" means no more than "teachers' meeting," except as a new name may be more attractive. In leadership, time, place, and general direction, what has been said of the teachers' meeting will apply to the "teachers' council." The several parts of the programme—the social, devotional, business, lesson study—will also apply. To a session holding monthly, two hours' time should be given.

The one important change from the methods of the weekly teachers' meeting will be in the lesson study plan of the monthly "council." The *lessons of the four Sundays* of the following month would be the subjects of study. Not more than an hour should be given to this study. The plan of study, therefore, divides the time among the four lessons, assigns a leader to each lesson to set forth its main points only, and to suggest lines of study to be followed in the home. The chief purpose of the "council" study, under its limitation of time, is to fix the proper use and application of the lessons of the next month as they relate especially to the needs of the school. Yet the very condensation required by the plan is a help to teachers in setting them at work to discover the pith and essence of each lesson. The methods of treating the lessons may be varied to advantage. Teachers, assigned a month in advance, may be required each to outline a lesson in full; or the "teaching points" from the several lessons in order may be drawn out from the body of teachers; or the teachers may constitute a "faculty," each with a department of work. To one may be given for the month's lessons the "connecting links;" to another, the "difficulties of the text" to a third, the "orientalisms;" and so on through the successive steps of study. A suggestive programme of the teach-

ers' council may exhibit the plan of work more plainly:

The Teachers' Council.

Time: Two Hours, Last Monday Night of Each Month.

Social Half Hour.

Devotional Service, fifteen minutes, led by teachers alternately.

Business of School, fifteen minutes, led by Superintendent.

Preview of Next Month's Lessons, thirty minutes, led by teachers alternately.

Additional Teaching Points, ten minutes, by volunteers.

The Normal Study (in course), twenty minutes, led by leader of training work.

XX. A TEACHER-TRAINING DEPARTMENT.

I. ITS NEED.

EVERY Sunday school needs a department or class in which those who are already teaching, or are to become its teachers, shall be trained for their work. Of many urgent reasons for such a department, the following are given:

1. Sunday school teachers need such training. To rightly study or to teach is an art that must be learned, as few are by nature "born students" or "born teachers." That one may thus learn is proved by the career of very many successful Sunday school teachers.

2. The church demands it. More and more it is requiring that the standard of Sunday school teaching shall be raised. The level of Bible knowledge and teaching is being steadily uplifted, and the church which neglects to provide for better teachers will inevitably fall behind in power and influence. The age demands that both preachers and teachers shall be more thoroughly equipped. The church has been making provision for the former, but not for the latter class.

3. The Bible itself deserves it. The teachers of no other text-book are so little trained in its use. The Bible is not "the power of God unto

salvation" in the hands of those who neglect the best methods of study and teaching it. It admonishes us to "rightly divide the word of truth," and to become "apt to teach."

4. The young people of the church are willing to be thus trained. Many of them would be glad to teach in the Sunday school, but they realize the demands of the work and their inability to do well what only a trained teacher can do.

II. ITS PURPOSE.

The purpose of the teacher-training class is fourfold:

1. To *study systematically the Bible* as a whole; to fix its great truths historically, doctrinally, etc., in their right relationship and order, thereby to attain such general knowledge of the Bible as will enable the teacher to rightly comprehend and teach the special Sunday school lessons.

2. To *study the church*, as the one divine institution among men, through which shall be accomplished the salvation of the world; to become familiar with its history, its leaders, its standards of doctrine, its forms of government, its relationships to home, to society, and the state; especially to study one's own denomination as a part of the general Church of Christ.

3. To *study the Sunday school* as a great de-

partment of the church, and as a field for life-long, fruitful service; to learn of its history, development, and plans, as no teacher can do his best work who is ignorant of the field in which he is to labor. As well expect one to practice medicine or law who is ignorant of its principles and methods.

4. *To learn how to teach.* True teaching is both a science and an art. It is a science in that it rests upon certain well-defined principles, which must enter into every step of successful teaching. It is an art to be learned as any other art, by observation, study, and practice. Thousands of young people in recent years have set themselves steadfastly to attain some measure of skill in this noble art. To know the Bible, the church, the Sunday school, the art of the teacher, are the four things that our teachers must learn, if only the church will give them the means through which to learn them.

III. ITS MEMBERSHIP.

From the ranks of those now teaching, and from the young people's societies of the church, must come those who are to form the teacher-training classes. From these classes will come the future teachers of the Sunday school. In every local society of young people will be found some who are willing to take up this train-

ing work, if it is put plainly and urgently before them. Let the pastor and superintendent present a simple and flexible plan of study to the teachers and young people, and call for volunteers to form a training class. Let them prepare a written pledge of membership, to be signed, as follows:

“The undersigned agree to form themselves into a training class, for the purpose of preparing themselves, by systematic study of the Bible, the church, and the Sunday school, for the work of teaching; to study diligently, as opportunity affords, the agreed course of study; to attend regularly the sessions of the class, unless providentially hindered; to continue as students of the class until duly graduated; after which to hold themselves in readiness at the call of the church to teach a Sunday school class.”

The number in the class will have little to do with its success, if those who join it are truly in earnest.

IV. LEADER, TIME, AND PLACE.

1. The superintendent or pastor, all things considered, should be the best person to lead the class, by reason of official obligation as well as educational fitness. If neither can do so, let the best leader the church affords be appointed.

2. If the class is composed of young people

who are not already teaching in the Sunday school, the best time is the regular Sunday school hour. Let the class take its usual part in the opening and closing exercises of the school, but during the time of the lesson study let it be excused from the regular lesson and confine itself to the teacher-training course, under such a plan as the leader may direct. If the class is composed wholly or in part of those already teaching in the school, its sessions may be held at an hour apart, on the Sabbath or during the week.

3. The place of the class is of minor importance. If a separate class room can be had, it will be best; if not, locate the class in the most convenient place, and let it be known to the school, and reported each Sabbath by the secretary, as the "teacher-training class."

V. THE COURSE OF STUDY.

1. There are several excellent courses for teacher-training, provided the church has no special course of its own. Among these are the "Chautauqua Normal Course," Semelroth's "Complete Normal Manual," the "Sunday School Teachers' Course," by G. W. Pease, the "Legion of Honor Bible and Training Course"—all suited chiefly to beginners, and already widely used. But by far the best plan is for *each church as a denomination*, in view of the

needs of its host of teachers, to put its official sanction upon some one course, or prepare a course of its own, and thus unify and stimulate the training work within its own bounds. Together with such a course, it should provide a church diploma and plan of study leading up to graduation and official recognition of graduates.

2. This course should include, in well-proportioned and selected matter, the *four essential elements* of a training course: The study of the Bible, of the church, of the Sunday school, of the teacher and his work. To omit any one of these elements is to seriously impair the needed equipment of the teacher.

3. The *plan of study* should include the study of the course by the local class, where organization into class is practicable, or by individual students, where there is not a class, under direction of the superintendent; an adjustment of study by class or student, suited to local conditions; a final written examination upon the several parts of the course as completed in order, based upon questions prepared and issued from the central directing office of the church; a required standard of proficiency in examination, upon which the diploma and honors of the church shall be conferred.

4. *Two years as a minimum* should be regarded as sufficient time for the completion of a

thorough training course, befitting the dignity of a church and the equipment of its teachers for their great work. A diligent use of spare moments for two years of time should bring to most students a mastery of the elements of the training work. A high standard, although not fully attained by the weaker students, is better than a low standard which offers little or no incentive to the better class of students. "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

5. In order to stimulate its training work, and to spur the class or individual student on to graduation and recognition, whenever the course of study is completed the church should encourage and plan for a *graduating service*, to be conducted on the Sabbath day, in the local church, with fitting accessories of music, decoration, addresses, and conferment of church diploma and honors.

XXI. A TEACHERS' INSTALLATION SERVICE.

EXPLANATORY.

1. THE formal installation of the officers and teachers elect of the Sunday school should generally obtain. It is more than a matter of form. Impressively conducted, it becomes one of the most profitable services of the Sunday school year. It dignifies the calling of the teacher, and sets before him the duties and responsibilities of his holy office. It calls the attention of the church to its faithful and often unrecognized servants who have the care of its children and youth. It honors the officers and teachers in the presence of the scholars as well as of their parents. Best of all, it reminds the newly chosen corps of certain obligations pertaining to their offices, and puts them under solemn covenant to discharge them.

2. An "installation service" may be simple, yet impressive and beautiful. The best time for it is Sunday night, following the annual election of the officers and teachers of the corps. The pastor might profitably give the entire evening to it, calling to his assistance the officers of the church. A full attendance of the membership

should be urged, and the Sunday school should be seated in a body at the front. Music and flowers, and whatever may enhance the occasion, should be provided. The installing officer should be the pastor himself or some officer of the church selected by him. The pastor should be the presiding officer of the evening, and, with other officers of the church, should be seated on the platform. A neat, printed programme, containing an outline (as given below) of the installation service, including the names of the officers and teachers elect, would be helpful and well worth the cost of providing copies of it for the congregation. By this means parts of the service could be entered into responsively by the congregation, and the service made more effective.

The following order of installation was used by the writer in his Sunday school work for many years:

INSTALLATION SERVICE.

1. *Opening Hymn*: "My faith looks up to thee."
2. *Reading the Roll of Officers and Teachers Elect.*
3. *Hymn*: "Stand up, stand up for Jesus." (During the singing the officers and teachers come forward to seats reserved in front.)
4. *Prayer*, by the pastor.

5. *Admonitory Scripture Readings:* 1 Corinthians xii. 4-12; 2 Timothy ii. 14-21. Led by pastor, or by an officer of the church appointed by him. (The reading will be more effective if read responsively by leader and congregation, or by leader and teachers elect.)

6. *Questions to the Officers and Teachers Elect,* by the pastor or installing officer (the officers and teachers standing, and making formal answer).

(a) Do you freely accept the position as officer or teacher to which the church has called you?

(b) Will you endeavor faithfully to discharge the duties pertaining to it?

(c) Will you strive earnestly to set before your scholars a good Christian example in all things?

(d) Will you give diligence to Bible study and preparation for teaching, as opportunity allows?

(e) Will you faithfully attend the "teachers' meeting," and such other meetings as may be convened by the superintendent, unless providentially hindered?

These or other questions, setting forth the duties to be met, should be asked.

7. *The Covenant of Office* (the pastor or installing officer reading it clause by clause; the officers and teachers repeating it after him):

"I do solemnly devote myself, in the fear and by the favor of God, to my Sunday school work.

I will study my Bible thoroughly, and strive to govern and to teach my scholars intelligently and faithfully. I will endeavor to be a loyal and exemplary member of my Church, and an example to my scholars in the use of the means of grace. I will counsel spiritually with my scholars at home and elsewhere, and will give such portion of my time as is possible to my Sunday school duties. I will strive to be punctual and present at school and at all meetings of teachers. In the presence of God and his people, and by the grace of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**"

Benediction by Congregation:

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

8. *Brief Address*, by pastor or some invited one.

9. *Closing Hymn*: "I love thy Church, O God."

XXII. A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

IN addition to the Sunday school helps for study and teaching supplied periodically by his own church, every teacher should become possessor of a "teachers' library." This may consist of few or many books, but whatever enters into it should be carefully selected and of permanent value. Many books in recent years have issued from the press that bear upon the teacher's work, some of which will survive, while others will be soon forgotten. Many Sunday schools are casting about for good books, to serve as a "normal" or teacher's library, something which every school should possess for the use of teachers, officers, and older scholars who are trying to fit themselves for better work, but are unable to purchase for themselves.

Below are given two lists of books which have been tried and approved. The first list is carefully chosen and classified, and contains books designed for general or interdenominational use. It includes a nearly complete though small "teacher's library." The second list is not classified, but the titles will indicate fairly

their contents. Any book from either list will be found modern and helpful. If not on sale locally, the books may be ordered through the several denominational publishing houses. Such prices as are given have been taken from publishers' lists, and include postage for mailing.

A TEACHER'S LIBRARY.

Best Commentary on Entire Bible.—Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's, four volumes; price \$8.

Best Bible Dictionary.—Smith's Abridged, "Workers' Edition;" price \$1.

Best Books on Sunday School.—Trumbull's "Yale Lectures on the Sunday School," price \$2; Vincent's "Modern Sunday School," price 90 cents; Cunyngnam's "History of Sunday Schools," price 50 cents; Schauffler's "Ways of Working," price \$1.

Best Books on Teaching.—Trumbull's "Teaching and Teachers," price \$1.25; Wells's "Sunday School Success," price \$1; Gregory's "Seven Laws of Teaching," price 50 cents.

Best Primary Books.—Black's "Practical Primary Plans," price \$1; Dubois's "Point of Contact," price 60 cents; Mrs. Crafts's "Open Letters to Primary Teachers," price 50 cents.

Best Teacher-Training Courses.—Hurlbut's "Revised Normal Outlines," price 40 cents; Dunning's "Bible Studies," price 40 cents.

Pease's "Normal Course," two books (in paper), price 25 cents each; Semelroth's "Complete Manual" (in paper), price 25 cents; Hamill's "Legion of Honor Course," two books (in paper), 25 cents for both.

A GENERAL LIST.

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