

it their countenance for a few moments. A very few attend the Bible classes."

Mr. Bengough points out that the institution of the Sunday-school by Robert Raikes, "awakened a desire to provide a better general education, and thus the public day school sprang into being. That the ability to read thus acquired necessitated an increased supply of books, and the Religious Tract Society was created to meet this want. The demand which this created for copies of the Scriptures led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society and all the blessings that that institution has conferred upon the world." A pretty good record for the Sunday-school!

But Mr. Bengough thinks that the Sunday-school has largely outgrown its usefulness in that respect—that it is now a "spiritual baby farm," to which careless parents send their children in order to get rid of them that they "may have a quiet snooze on Sunday afternoon." It is, to change the figure, very much like a kodak camera, "You press the button, we do the rest." It has almost entirely relieved the conscience of the parents of their responsibility for the spiritual education of their children. He asks, "What percentage of parents know even the name of the teacher to whom they have committed the spiritual up-bringing of their children? Men are more interested in the name of the man at the livery stable who feeds and grooms their horses."

He discusses the evils of children going unprepared to Sunday-school—they do not know the books of the Bible, do not know the leading events, do not know anything to make the lesson interesting. The following is his

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

What can parents do then to co-operate with the teachers, and make the school better, assuming that it be determined not to shut up our Sunday-schools?

1. Parents can get acquainted with the teachers, and tell them about their children—their little peculiarities, their difficulties, their surroundings. They can invite the teachers to their houses occasionally, so that the teachers may adapt their instruction to the home life of the scholars.

2. Parents can pray for the teachers, and see that their children do so also.

3. Parents can speak a cheering word occasionally to and for the teacher, and to the child they can show that they have sincere regard for the teacher. They should not allow the children to speak disrespectfully of the teachers.

4. Parents can co-operate with the teachers in the maintenance of order. There can be no true profit without respectful attention in the class, and parents are bound to command their children to give their teacher a fair chance.

5. Parents might occasionally bring together in their homes the class as a class, with the teacher, and spend the evening together in mutual intercourse and fellowship.

6. Parents might, could, and should help the scholars to prepare the lessons. Let the lesson for next Sabbath form the selection for reading at the family altar, and let prayer be offered for help in the study of it. Then let father, or mother, or both, explain the hard words, give the story of the lesson in its relation to the book of which it forms part. Give some facts about the lesson which cannot be found in the Bible; help the scholar to hunt up references, etc.

7. Parents should hear each of their children repeat the Golden Text before going to Sunday-school, and on returning they should catechise them on the lesson learned.

8. Parents should visit the school, should talk about the school to the children and in their presence; and

9. Parents should attend the Bible classes where possible, or co-operate as visitors, or in some other way, with the teachers and officers.

10. Parents should take an interest in the library of the school—get acquainted with the books; read them to their children, or better still, get the children to read them aloud around the fireside. So with the Sunday-school papers.

11. Parents who have no time to give to their children should drop lodges, clubs, politics, business, or anything else that interferes as a barrier to prevent the fullest, freest confidences between them and their children.

12. Lastly, parents should teach their children the truths of God's Word as fully and independently as though there were no Sunday-schools in existence—which then would not be if parents did this.

With much in Mr. Bengough's paper, we cannot but agree, and we strongly commend the twelve points of his application above given. There is, however, another side to the question. Of course, in urging his reform he presents all the reasons he can why it should be promoted. But there are many parents, even in our congregations—more's the pity—who are ill-fitted, or not fitted at all, for the discharge of their solemn responsibilities to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. These children would be almost entirely neglected but for the Sunday-school.

The one great advantage of the modern Sunday-school system is the enormous stimulus which it has given to Bible study, and to the preparation of short, terse comments and explanations of Holy Writ, whereby otherwise ill-equipped teachers may be able to do most efficient work. Light from every source has been focussed on the sacred page. Whole commentaries have been condensed into fly leaves, which are scattered like the leaves of autumn all over the land. And these leaves, like the leaves of the Tree of Life, are "for the healing of the nations." We have seen in the heart of the black belt in Alabama, poor, ignorant, but pious, coloured teachers, gathering the children around them, and by means of the cheap, simple