

ship, social purity—these are the grandest themes in which to enlist this great and growing army of eager, earnest young souls. Let every school be a recruiting ground for the League. Let all our superintendents and teachers become its captains and leaders, and our ministers its general officers for this grand, moral crusade—to set up God's kingdom upon earth and pull Satan's kingdom down.

Sunday-school Work, and How it Can Be Improved.

BY THE REV. F. N. PELOUBET, D.D.

I. The Object. The Sunday-school is one of several instrumentalities by which the Church teaches the Bible facts and truths, "the sword of the Spirit," through the personal power of an experienced soul in contact with those to be taught, for the purpose of leading them to choose God and a holy life as their portion, and of training them to a noble character and useful life "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

II. The Chief Difficulties are:—

1. The shortness of the time possible in the Sunday-school, not exceeding thirty or forty minutes once a week.

2. The largeness of the subject, the whole Bible, especially in connection with the new light thrown upon it of late years. These two together render certain kinds of study impossible in the average class.

3. The difficulty of getting the children to study at home during the week on account of the overpressure of other studies.

4. The great diversity of age, ability and attainment in the scholars, together with irregular attendance.

5. The want of enough thoroughly trained and devoted teachers.

III. The defects of the present system grow chiefly out of the above difficulties. In order to understand them clearly it is necessary to keep in mind what are the essentials of the present system, as distinguished from the mere accessories.

The present system may be defined, in general terms, as the uniform study by all of the whole Bible, in chronological order once in a number of years, alternating more or less frequently between the Old and New Testament.

In general, I would say that most of the practical defects are either—(1) defects in the method of using and developing the system by teachers and lesson-writers, and not in the system itself; or (2) grow out of conditions that cannot at once be changed, and are divergencies from an ideal, impossible to be realized immediately, under the circumstances, by any possible practical system.

It is not a system for college classes, nor for

select clubs, nor for those who can give much time to thorough study. I have taken Diogenes' lantern and looked everywhere I could in England and America for a better system, and I have not yet seen even the shadow of one which is better in its essential features under present conditions.

Still, there are a number of well-defined defects in the present system as commonly used.

The First Defect is the very limited, indefinite, imperfect knowledge of the Bible attained by the scholars. There is no question as to the fact. And no system can change the fact so long as the teaching is confined to a half hour a week. But there can be great improvements. The same complaint is made of our day schools. And the fact that so much fault is found with both day and Sunday-schools is a sign of life, and a matter of encouragement.

The Remedy is not to be found in a mere change of system, but under any system in—

1. A better and more definite teaching, inductive and practical.

2. A greater inspiration to home-study.

3. By the learning of more facts through continued drill and of more passages of Scripture by heart.

4. By supplemental lessons in definite catechetical form for all classes under the adult, giving general, condensed, bird's-eye view. This is absolutely necessary under any system.

5. By examinations such as are proposed by President Harper, and sent out by the American Institute of Sacred Literature, and the examination by the English Sunday-school Union.

6. By Normal classes, courses for special Bible study, the International Bible Reading Association, University Extension courses, and similar things, that awaken enthusiasm and bring opportunity for Bible study.

The Second Defect is the want of continuity in the lessons as some use them, the study of them as detached portions, what has been brightly called "the hop, skip and jump" method.

This does not inhere in the system. It is not the lessons as planned, but the teachers that "hop, skip and jump." I notice in the lessons for 1895 the International Lesson Committee have made an effort to avoid this danger by suggesting a whole section of which the lesson is the centre, section to be joined section in a continuous history, as they have all along intended the teachers to do, as some of us lesson-writers have done for years.

Mr. Jacobs has said that the Lord has skimmed the cream of the churches and put it into the Sunday-school. I am inclined to go further, and believe that by the Sunday-school teaching He turns even the skim-milk into cream, such a large proportion of Bible study being in preparation for teaching. Large classes, except for adults and primary classes, are not so good either for the church or for the children,