

Normal Department.

TEACHER TRAINING.

One of the weakest points in our Sabbath School system is the lack of training for the work of teaching on the part of most those who take charge of classes. None lament this more than the earnest, self-denying, devoted teachers themselves. Yet they find it difficult, for various reasons, to acquire the necessary instruction. The large majority are unable to give more time than is required for the preparation of their weekly lesson. In cities and towns classes may be organized for the study of one or the other of the most excellent normal courses specially prepared,—Dr. Worden's, Dr. Hulbert's, Prof. Hammil's Dr. Semelroth's and others—but the large majority of our workers cannot avail themselves of these. They have not skilled leaders to take them in hand, and they lack the inspiration which numbers gives. When special normal classes under competent leadership can be formed, the best results possible, under our system of amateur, volunteer teachers may be expected. We want to say distinctly, for in some quarters our aims are misunderstood, that the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee have nothing but the most cordial approval to give to the noble work (one of our own members); in New Brunswick, where Dr. Hurlbut's course has been adopted as the official provincial text-book; and wherever else this method of work is carried on. But we think that something simpler is better adapted to smaller schools and the great body of our teachers. The plan proposed is laid down in the Teacher-Training Department of our Scheme of Higher Religious Instruction. It will be found on the last page of the cover of this number.

The weekly meeting of the teachers for lesson study must be the basis of all successful work. Satisfactory results to the teachers themselves, therefore to their scholars, cannot be attained where there is no weekly conference over the topics to be handled on the coming Sabbath. We look upon this meeting as a *sine qua non* of a well organized school. We believe such meeting to be practicable in every school, with but rare exceptions. We have held such meetings under difficulties as great as any that we have seen urged. If the teachers of a school do not hold this weekly meeting the real fundamental reason is that they are not sufficiently in earnest in their work. Where they will not do this they will scarcely enter upon any course of training whatever. Our plan therefore recognizes that the chief desideratum for most of our teachers is a thorough preparation of the current lessons. But along with this we prescribe the careful reading of one book during the year. This is not a dry skeleton of lectures to be filled up by a gifted instructor, but a readable volume that any ordinary group of teachers can discuss in a few minutes devoted to it at their weekly meeting. Yet the thoughtful perusal of it, and the practical illustration of its principles in application to the lessons in hand, will greatly increase a teacher's efficiency, and prepare the way for a more elaborate course where that can be entered upon. One who has mastered Morison's *Hand-Book*, and has intelligently tried to apply its hints to his work from week to week will be a much more skillful teacher than he otherwise could have become. Our course for the current year is exceedingly simple, and within the time and capacity of all our teachers. In the TEACHERS' MONTHLY we will publish each month, beginning with July, a brief analysis of a portion of the Text-Book. This is prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School. It is no mere mechanical dissection of the work, but a restudy of the topics by one of our most competent educationists. The next examination will be held on June 29th, and will, for the convenience of those who missed the April one, embrace the whole text-book and the lessons of the six months. The examination on Oct. 5th will be on the lessons of the preceding quarter, with the first half of the text-book; and that on Jan. 25th, 1896 will be on the lessons of the last quarter of 1895, and the last half of the text-book. We give on the next page, the questions asked at two examinations already held. It will be seen at once that teachers who have taken a course qualifying them to handle such papers have acquired no mean knowledge of the art of teaching as applied to the Sabbath School. Those wishing information about the course should write to REV. W. FARQUHARSON, CLAUDE, ONT., the vice-convener in charge of this department.