

hand us over their responsibility." No; nor can they hand over their responsibility even to the State. Miss Soulsby considers that religious teaching is outside the sphere of school teaching. That is to say, school can do something. It can familiarise girls with our Lord's life, and make it their standard and daily example. "Knowledge of Old and New Testament history, and such practical teaching as I have spoken of, leaves time for little else in school," says Miss Soulsby. She thinks, nevertheless, that a course of reading on religious subjects, comprising such heads as: Study of the Bible itself; the present position of science and of criticism with regard to religion, dogmatics, Church History, illustration of the Bible in modern discoveries and travel, practical devotional reading, should be undertaken by women. And she confidently affirms that of the seven heads mentioned above, devotional reading is the only one in which the average woman could stand examination, and yet it is her duty to know something of the other six. She suggests that there should be issued an authorized scheme of reading, giving, under such headings as the above, the *minimum* course of readings which an average woman should feel bound to master as an elementary part of her education. "There might be more than one such list, so as to give scope for varying views, but authorisation by some committee of repute would be a strong feature of the desired usefulness.

With regard to the question of organising secondary education, perhaps the most interesting and striking discourse of the whole Congress, was that delivered by the Right Reverend Dr. George Ridding, Bishop of Southwell. And on the whole, the most important part of it, from our present point of view, was the distinct

and courageous stand made against what the Bishop called "the ladder idea"—i.e., a ladder, or uninterrupted progression from primary schools to the University. To persons who have seriously considered the practical objects of teaching, and the practical results which may be hoped from teaching in the vast majority of cases, it would seem almost a work of supererogation to dwell on the objections to the "ladder" scheme; and almost a sufficient reply to its promoters to say, "It is impossible; therefore not open to discussion." But, unfortunately, "men are but children of a larger growth" in eager credulity on points which touch their own desires. From various causes and motives, which need not here and now be insisted on, there is a large number of persons who wish very much that a boy could rise uninterruptedly from the lowest class in the Board School to brilliant distinction at Oxford or Cambridge. They would like that it should be possible. They would like it so much, that they cannot bring themselves to believe that it is impossible. There are, perhaps, some skilled handicraftsmen who would not be ready to admit the converse proposition: who would entertain well-grounded doubts of its being possible for a senior wrangler, for instance, to descend—or, if the word be offensive, let us say to proceed, from the higher mathematics, studied abstractedly, to the manufacture of perfect Sheffield cutlery, or exquisitely fitted cabinet-work, by a consecutive series of classes.

The Bishop hits a notable nail on the head when he says: "The ladder must not be shortened at the top to flatter men into false ideas of equality." And again: "There is a real delusion in the ladder idea that unifying education is an end in itself, in the face of the very varied objects for which people want to be educated. There must be three main