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### The Advance of the Sunday School.

BY B. F. JACOBS, CHICAGO.

(This is a very telling reply to Mr. Bok's recent detraction of Sunday-schools.—Ed.)

I. Growth in numbers. The Sunday-schools reported by the International S. S. Association now number more than 150,000, with a membership of nearly 14,000,000. The annual gain for the three years ending June, '96, was 3,335 schools, with a total membership of nearly 450,000, or an average of nine schools and a membership of 1,200 for each day. The increase since the date mentioned is greater than for the previous years. This growth compares favourably with the increase in population, the attendance upon public schools, and the gain in church membership. All classes are reached.

II. Improvement in organization. One of the Chicago daily papers, having examined the work of S. S. organizations in Illinois, expressed the opinion that it fully equalled the organization of either of the political parties. The work is divided into departments as follows: (a) Department of organization. For the study of the whole field and the ingathering of all who will come. The

work among the coloured people of the South is a separate organization in each State and county, but is under the direction of the International Executive Committee. (b) Department of instruction.

(c) The Primary department or council. For the formation of primary unions in cities and larger towns, 250 such unions now exist and the numbers are rapidly increasing. (d) The Home Class department. To reach and help those who cannot or do not regularly attend Sunday-school, including parents, railroad, telegraph, telephone and street car employees; travelling men when absent from home, the sick and infirm, and it will soon include the army. (e) Connected with the Home Department is the house-to-house visitation that none may be overlooked. (f) Many cities now have union teachers' meetings, held weekly, conducted by able leaders and attended by hundreds of teachers. Great musical festivals are held in several cities. Rally days are numerous, and in some instances the enthusiasm reaches the whole county. (g) At the great assemblies, like Chautauqua, a department of Sunday-school work is maintained—these are multiplying. (h) The American Sunday-school Union is actively engaged, employing many workers in the newer States and in the Territories, in organizing new schools and aiding those already existing. (i) All the larger denominations are extending and improving their Sunday-school work, employing hundreds of workers, organizing new schools, helping old ones, holding conventions, institutes and conferences, and one denomination has four railroad cars used to organize schools in the newer portions of the country. (j) Training schools. There is at Springfield, Massachusetts, a Bible Normal College, specially to teach and train Sunday-school workers, and at the Northfield and Chicago schools, of which Mr. Moody is president, and at the Baptist and Methodist training schools for Christian workers, at Chicago, special attention is given to Sunday-school work, and this is also true of all the great missionary organizations, of all the national and State organizations of Christian young people, and of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Theological seminaries and academies are giving prominence to Sunday-school work.

III. Improved Sunday-schools. The improvement in the schools is evidenced by better buildings, many erected for this purpose, with suitable rooms for