

His position is that all the congregation ought to assemble at least once a week to engage in the study of the word, where each may present the difficulties which he may have personally met and secure the benefit of the judgment of others thereupon. The seed thought was lodged in his mind very early in life by reading the life of pastor Harms, of Harmansburg. This most remarkable man was in the habit of gathering his people together every Sabbath afternoon for bible study, and his congregation became intensely interested in these exercises. Mr. Parsons thought surely if those Germans became so enthusiastic over the study of the bible, we might be able also to get up an interest in the same direction. He recommended this to his own congregation when he became a minister. His church was 250 years old, and had always been orthodox, yet they were doing little for God in comparison with what they should have done. When he urged the importance of this work his people said "yes, it would be an excellent thing," but when asked to adopt it they said "oh, it would never do here; out on the prairies or in some new country it would do very well, but we have had our regular services and cannot get out of the old ruts." It was many years before he succeeded in getting them to make the trial, but at last he succeeded and the result has been that all the services of the church have become much more interesting and the membership has very largely increased. His plan at present is a sermon in the morning, a church study of the bible in the afternoon conducted by himself so far as the adults are concerned, and by the superintendent, officers, and teachers among the children, and a grand prayer-meeting in the evening. He contended that this course cultivated the entire church and fitted the members for usefulness, so that when the minister died the church would still live and prosper whether they found another minister to fill his place at once or not. Then the minister multiplies himself. He spoke of a young man who worked in a foundry where he had a great number of infidel companions, they would press him with their objections, and any he could not answer he would bring to the Bible study and mention them there, and Mr. Parsons would give him the best answer he could, and he would go back and give them to his fellow workmen. He found also that it was an excellent means of bringing out the best talent in the church. One of the most gifted persons in his class was a poor washerwoman, she seemed to know more of the bible than any one else that attended it. He found also that after these studies sometimes one would come to him saying I would like to teach in the Sunday School. "Well," I say, go out and get yourself a class and you shall teach." Sometimes an infidel neighbor was asked to come in, he found his objections met in a kind and respectful manner and he came again, and then his family came, and so the work extends. He also considered this the very best way of retain-