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Training and Qualification of Workers in Week-Day Religious Education

CHARLES M. BRUNSON*

The securing of a sufficient number of ideally trained and qualified teachers for the work in Week-Day Religious Instruction is an impossibility at the present time. The securing of adequately trained teachers is the biggest problem in the public schools as well. In spite of the large number of training schools in this country, the number of teachers trained is far short of the demand for them and always will be until inducements in the way of salary increases are in proper proportions.

Our problem of securing a teaching force is linked very closely with the public-school problem. The situation has been especially difficult during the last five years on account of a lack of numbers of teachers properly trained. Where the finances will warrant and the time of holding classes will permit the employment of teachers for full time, the problem is greatly simplified; but where neither of these conditions obtains, the problem becomes largely one of scouting through the community and finding people—married women for the greater part—who have had both training and experience in the public school. These, with a few additions from the ranks of the ministry and a few persons with good experience in Sunday school, constitute the teaching body in the community in which the writer has directed this work during the last four and a half years.

All of us realize, of course, that much temporizing has been done in these schools. But the time is fast approaching when much larger plans must be made. The institutions already established must devise a system of training workers for this field, or new institutions must be started which can do this very essential work. In my opinion, based largely on my own experience, and that of others, the future workers will come from the ranks of those trained for public-school teaching with this training supplemented by courses in Bible study and other kindred subjects. It is to be hoped that some time in the near future the Church will get a true vision of the importance of the educational side of its work, and prepare its teachers as it does its ministers and missionaries.

In the meantime no ground should be lost. This new department of religious work is causing even the most conservative church directors to begin to realize the necessity for a trained teaching force if this part of the work is to be done effectually.

If I were to propose a program relative to the supplying of teachers for this work, it would be something like the following:

(1) Develop the work in any community only just as rapidly as a teaching force adequately prepared can be secured. To go beyond this spells failure in that community and a set-back for the whole movement. It occurs to me that the securing of sufficient number of teachers to carry on a Week-day program for either individual churches or even a denominational program will be next to impossible at present.

(2) Use the existing agencies to train for the immediate future. The

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technique of the class room is common to all kinds of teaching in the same grade.

(3) Arrange, where possible, supplementary courses to those given in normal schools and educational departments of colleges and universities which would enable students to specialize in religious subjects. This could be done for regular credit even if not given under the direction of the institution itself. Many Christian colleges already have this arrangement in their program.

(4) Let those interested in this great work use every influence toward the churches, adopting the means of giving the proper training for the teaching function of the church with standards no less in requirement than are now existing for the public schools.

School people are watching this movement critically as they should. The character of the work must meet their approval or else we cannot and ought not expect their coöperation.

The Fine Arts in the Curriculum

H. AUGUSTINE SMITH, M. A.*

1. The fine art of *hymn singing*.
2. The fine art of *choral singing*.
3. The fine art of *community ritual*.
4. The fine art of *pageantry*.
5. The fine art of *visualization*.

1. The fine art of hymn singing has come and gone. Regnant in the days of Lowell Mason and his children's concerts in Park Street church, Boston; John Zeundel at the Plymouth Church Organ during Beecher's days; William Bradbury in Baptist Tabernacle, New York City; Sherwin and Lathbury at Chautauqua, N. Y.; congregational singing today has lapsed into *painful silence*. Caught up by the great war and stressed for its emotional glow and compelling unities, community singing reached unwonted heights. Now we are muffled and shrouded, supine in the plague area of *spectatoritis*, content to buy our music and sit on the bleachers to see how hirelings work.

When we do sing, seventy-five per cent of all participants sing *notes* and not *words*. Only the swift and accurate reader is able to negotiate the tenor, bass or alto part and plumb or scale the soprano depths or heights; and have mental energy left for the text. Cross-examine the next hymn singing congregation on the poetry, the on-rush of stanzas, the surge of thought and feeling. Query the next hymnal committee on how they proceeded to choose a new book; playing it *through* at the piano or reading it through, and *again* through, for its poetry.

Schools of religion should usher in a new day for the dying hymnal, for the ragged and torn Psalter. Not only will they put an end to the disreputable collection of jazz and language heaped upon Sunday schools, but they will make the hymn book live, stressing its wonder stories, its famous men and

*A paper prepared for the Nineteenth General Convention of the R. E. A. by Professor H. Augustine Smith, Boston University, and read, in the absence of Professor Smith, by the Rev. F. E. Butler, Providence, R. I.

This is a paper on the correlated arts, rather than an argument for position in curricula.