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FURTHER PROGRESS IN THE GRADED SUNDAY SCHOOL

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activity. The principle has been best worked out in the earlier grades, especially in the kindergarten and primary, but, above these grades, except in a few schools, this work has not as yet been attempted. The other need—and it is fundamental and imperative—is to find a way of awakening many parents, and securing their enlightened and interested co-operation in the moral and religious nurture of their own children. Something can be done in this direction by getting parents themselves to connect themselves with Bible classes, if that is possible; by keeping them informed of the work of their children in the school, and offering them teachers' helpers, ask them to teach their children the lessons, on the ground that, in this natural and unforced way, opportunity is afforded parents each week for conversation with their children on moral and religious subjects; and, finally, by forming parents' classes for the study of the problems of childhood and youth, with a view to their practical solution. If the success attending a few such classes is any indication, parents will attend such classes if the approach to the problems is practical and close to life.

FURTHER PROGRESS IN THE GRADED SUNDAY SCHOOL

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Four features of this progress may here be considered: the administration, the teacher, the worship, and the principles of the curriculum.

1. THE ADMINISTRATION.

Are we not generally agreed now that the church should have a plural ministry, that a church of two hundred or more members needs at least three salaried leaders to give all their time to its work—the minister, the director of religious education, and the social worker?

The Sunday school, since it is an educational agency of importance, is to be conducted in every possible case by a professionally trained educator who has knowledge, interest,

aptitude and energy for this kind of service. The primary function of the Sunday school is to awaken and develop the moral-religious life of children and adolescents. This is the church's direct opportunity to improve the rising generation. Another function of the Sunday school, secondary but by no means small, is to add to the moral-religious education of adults, particularly of those adults who are parents. The church services provide much in this direction, but this needs to be supplemented by systematic study and instruction in home making, child training and welfare, social conditions, institutions and activities, civic organization, duties and responsibilities; and for those who wish, in biblical interpretation, church history, the history, philosophy and psychology of religion, etc.

An adult department of the Sunday school is therefore to be built up, to accomplish this further educational work in the community; classes are to be organized and conducted in these vital subjects of social welfare. They need not meet at the regular Sunday-school hour, and certainly must not in any way interfere with the school for children and adolescents. The Church School, in fact, is to become a more extensive, varied and complex agency, with many kinds of classes and activities, with meetings at various hours on various days of the week in addition to Sunday. For the idea of the church and the training of the church and the work of the church are becoming socialized. The church will continue its historic function of conducting religious worship, preaching theological doctrine and upholding moral ideals; but it is also to enter directly, concretely and fully upon its social mission to remove those conditions of living which involve men in dependence, poverty, disease, crime, insanity, misery, and failure. And the Sunday school is to organize the adults of the church for the study of these social problems and of the duty of church people with regard to them.

The director of religious education, although he *may* act as superintendent of the Sunday school, will probably prefer to have as superintendent some competent, energetic, resourceful person who can relieve him of the detailed administration, so that during the Sunday school hour he can receive and place new pupils, confer with parents, rearrange and adjust class affairs, advise with teachers, look after the textbooks,

control the atmosphere of the school, and in many other ways keep the educational machinery running smoothly. Throughout the week also the superintendent can manage the business and conduct the social occasions of the school, greatly to the aid of the director of religious education.

The director should, nevertheless, be the head of the school, the superintendent serving as assistant or associate to him, because the director is professionally trained and is engaged by the church to make the Sunday-school effective. He must give character, unity and personality to the whole organization, and must be held responsible for its success. Therefore the superintendent, teachers and other officers of the school should be elected on the approval of the director of religious education, and should co-operate with him in carrying through a complete scheme of moral-religious education for children, adolescents and adults.

In the church as a whole the minister must be the head, for a plural ministry requires organization. The director of religious education will therefore be subordinate to the minister of the church. But the minister, while he should act as supervisor, counsellor and promoter of the Sunday school, must be well qualified for this function, and will interfere as little as possible with this specific work that the director of religious education has as his special task. Only by such an adjustment of relationships within a plural ministry can first-class men be secured as directors, for they will require freedom to develop the school on educational lines in accordance with their professional training.

The director can perhaps administer the school best by organizing his officers and teachers, all included, into "the Sunday School Board," to meet twice or three times a year and go thoroughly over the plan and the working of the school, to keep it up to standard. In the intervals of the Board meetings, an Executive Committee of the Board can make its activity continuous.

2. THE TEACHER.

The teacher is the center of the Sunday school problem in the sense that no plans for moral-religious education, however excellent, can actually succeed except as some teachers carry them through for some pupils. Our teaching force in the Sunday school is still amateur and voluntary. There does

not seem as yet to be much movement in the direction of professional paid teachers. The matter is discussed, but the discussion has changed conditions only slightly. If one asks *why* we are not moving rapidly in the direction of professional paid Sunday school teachers, the answers may be various: there is an ingrained sentiment against it; the money could not be raised; the Sunday school work is not extensive enough—one hour a week—to build a profession around, etc.

The ingrained sentiment against professional paid instruction in the Sunday school undoubtedly exists. But is it any better founded than the former sentiment against a paid ministry? Shall we not outgrow the one as we have outgrown the other? Are we not in fact proceeding on the principle of a professional paid teaching force for the Sunday school in appointing directors of religious education on salary in the churches? He is the *head* teacher, professional and paid. The more we realize how much knowledge, training and experience a Sunday-school teacher needs in order to be really competent for her work with our children, the more we see how inefficient the average teacher is, and without professional training and professional standing must continue to be, and the more we see how unreasonable it is to ask people to do this work gratuitously.

In my experience, the greatest difficulty a school has in maintaining a graded curriculum at a high educational standard is the limited efficiency and the irregularity of the teachers. It is not easy to get suitable teachers, and when a director of religious education applies any pressure upon a teacher for regularity of attendance, for visiting members of her class during the week, or for attending a monthly teachers' meeting, the teacher gives one to feel that she cannot undertake these additional duties. In many schools the teaching staff changes from one-fifth to one-third every year. The average "stay" of a teacher is two or three years only. A director works diligently for a year to train a teacher for conducting a given course; a year or two later she withdraws and another must be trained. This continuous coming and going of teachers, with much irregularity of attendance, militates against the success of the graded school, which must make greater demands upon the teachers. It is a task by no means small, as we well know, for a person to be a Sunday-school teacher. One hour

a week, some one says, as though that were all. In fact, it is not too much to say that Sunday-school teaching demands, when it is done right and is all counted up, not less than one-half day each week, making twenty-six days of each year—*nearly a month annually*; and it is time that is spent with much nervous wear.

Where competent teachers can be secured to give their services gratuitously, it is of course unnecessary to pay them. But is it not generally difficult to secure volunteer teachers who are competent, teachable, regular, dependable, and in other ways satisfactory? While if the teachers were receiving salaries—which would not of course be large—50 cents to \$3.00 or \$5.00 a Sunday, let us say, they would be responsible for knowing how to do their work, and for doing it steadily and well; they would be amenable to the directions of the officers of the school; they would have a better standing in the church and the community; they would have more self-respect and more impulse for their duties; and they would be able to secure better attendance and work from their pupils. It is all wrong to think that the school of moral and religious education should not be professionalized. Every large social institution *has* to be professionalized before it can do its work right.

It is commonly said, and it is entirely true, that the churches must definitely and reasonably finance their Sunday schools. We are dragging the Sunday school along on a charity basis in churches that are entirely able to pay for professional service. We give free our Sunday school supplies to the pupils whose families could just as well pay what the supplies cost, and are accustomed to paying for the children's day-school books. The whole system of Sunday-school finances needs reconsideration and reconstruction. It is a question whether the parents in the church, the pupils themselves, and the community as a whole will accord the Sunday school its true place, importance and dignity, and whether the graded school can largely succeed, until this change has been made.

3. THE WORSHIP.

In the meeting of the Sunday school the general half-hour of time is as important as the half-hour of class-work. Or, if that is stating it too strongly, the general half-hour is at least

of great and vital importance. The routine administrative features have their place in this period, but should occupy as little time as possible. The main purpose of this assembly of officers, teachers and pupils is the common worship, which stimulates the religious feelings of reverence, faith and devotion, renews the consciousness of God and our relation to Him, induces religious peace, joy and enthusiasm, and awakens the sense of human companionship and helpfulness under a common Father. Should anything in the Sunday school hour really count for more than this religious worship, the creation of this atmosphere of seriousness and uplift, this union with others in a common religious experience and expression? How can we bring the school to understand and appreciate this period of worship, so that its values can be attained? What successful ways have *you* found for suppressing in these precious moments the talkative, restless and *busy* people in the Sunday-school room—mostly pupils, but sometimes officers or teachers?

The Sunday-school worship will be satisfying and effective in proportion as it is real and fresh. The first danger is that it will be conventional. If a school uses the same order of opening exercises Sunday after Sunday for a year, the teachers and pupils get to know just what is coming and will acquire the habit of going through the period perfunctorily. Thereupon the attention is not held, the thoughts wander from the worship, and restlessness results. Do we not find that there needs to be a constant variety, in order to awaken interest and expectancy—not an artificially produced variety, but new features frequently replacing old ones, *some* new feature every time. It requires the active service of a committee supporting the director and superintendent to provide these new features every Sunday, in addition to the singing of hymns and the making of prayers. Many suggestions along these lines are already available for those who will use them. Brief addresses, recitation of poems or scripture by individuals or groups, story-telling by some teacher or other person, missionary incidents, special music by singer or classes, and similar features, will supply the weekly variety necessary to keep the program of opening exercises from becoming conventional.

Is it even harder to break up the *formality* of our religious worship? The ideal status is that every person every time enters deeply and personally into every prayer, hymn and other

portion of the worship. It seems to me that the example of the superintendent is the primary influence here. If he goes through his parts of the Sunday-school service mechanically, the others will probably do the same; while if he sets an example of genuine, sincere devotion he will inspire a like state of mind in others. Next to the influence of the superintendent is that of the teachers. The teachers who Sunday after Sunday enter wholly into the spirit of the exercises and participate earnestly where there are words to be said, will find their pupils following the example, and really in no other way can they be brought to do so. Here, as in so many respects, the school will be what the officers and teachers by their personal ideals and acts make it. One is increasingly impressed with the great influence of the moral-religious atmosphere of the school. "Atmosphere" may seem a somewhat intangible thing, but it is very real; it is the sum of all those acts, feelings and relations that produce a situation favorable to the results which one desires to accomplish. The atmosphere in the Sunday school should be produced with intelligence, care and purpose to influence all religiously, to put them in the right mood, to arouse the proper interests, and to establish the true point of view for moral-religious awakening and development.

It is a clear advance that we have learned (when conditions permit) to hold the general exercises of the school in three divisions—the primary department in one room, the intermediate department in another, the adolescent and adult departments in still a third. (If the school is large enough, there would be some reason for separating also the adolescent and adult departments). Such division is based upon psychological and social principles; it corresponds to instinctive separations between success stages of growth, and permits the religious exercises to fit the mental, moral and religious needs of each group.

4. PRINCIPLES OF THE CURRICULUM.

On some of the principles that underly a graded curriculum for the Sunday school we seem to be reaching agreement, for example:

1. That the content and method of the curriculum shall be determined by the moral-religious needs, capacities and interests of the pupils at the successive stages of their growth.

2. That the line of education shall be straightforward from the age of four to the age of twenty-one, each year's course constituting a distinct advance upon the one that preceded, and making full use of all that has been accomplished in the preceding courses.

3. That the regular school year of nine months, beginning in September and ending in June, with a special program for the summer months, is the best annual schedule for many schools.

4. That a full outline of each course, and a specific treatment of each lesson in each course, is necessary to the great majority of teachers and pupils.

5. That the material of the lessons should still be chiefly from the Bible, but that extra-biblical material should be also abundantly and freely used.

6. That the subjects and the lesson arrangement of the courses be chosen from the point of view of the moral-religious development of the child rather than for acquiring systematic knowledge of the Bible, except perhaps in some of the adolescent years.

7. That education is not identical with instruction, but is greater, deeper, more varied and comprehensive, involving the development of character and the determination of conduct.

Additional principles are emerging as we study out more carefully the construction of our graded curricula. I venture an inquiry concerning three of these:

1. Is it becoming evident that we cannot have a uniform curriculum for all schools, because the schools represent different points of view and different types of people? Does it appear that the division lines between these points of view and types of people are not coincident with denominational lines, so that a denominational publishing house cannot, by issuing a denominational series of graded lessons, meet the actual need of *all* graded schools within the denomination? There are at present, in nearly all denominations, several types of Sunday schools, differentiated from each other by varying degrees of departure from the traditional theology and from the traditional interpretation of the Bible, and by varying degrees of use of educational principles and methods in Sunday-school training and instruction. This fact does

not make a denominational graded course undesirable, for such a course can strike an average of the schools of its denomination, meeting fairly well the needs of many schools. And this kind of uniformity is much in advance of the *ungraded* uniform course which it will supersede. But we certainly should have curricula and carefully worked out courses therewith that shall be prepared to cross denominational lines and fit the varying types of schools according to the position they occupy regarding theology, the interpretation of the Bible, and educational principles and methods.

Schools of one denomination will not make use of the published courses of another denomination, but can make use of non-denominational courses. The two principal series of this kind which have been already fully developed, the Bible Study Union Lessons (published now by Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York) and the Constructive Bible Studies (published by the University of Chicago Press) are excellent in many ways and deserve wide use. Certainly the editors, authors and publishers of these series are at the front of our Sunday-school advance. But is there not room for other independent attempts, to meet the variety of views and needs? Is it not too early to standardize the graded curriculum? Shall we not benefit by still farther experimentation? In ten years of hard and earnest work upon the graded curriculum we have come a long way and have had remarkable success. But the efforts should not be relaxed; we should not assume that the goal has been reached, or is in sight. Educational principles and methods in the *public* schools are in a changing state, and are likely to be remade in many respects in the next ten and twenty years. We must keep pace with the whole educational advance, and not allow the graded Sunday school to settle down with educational determinatives already obsolescent. Even if my suggestion here is correct, the Sunday School Department of the Religious Education Association is least in need of it. But I speak it by way of encouragement to our own Sunday-school leaders in their continued and strenuous search for the best kind of graded curricula and lessons. Let us work on for at least another ten or even twenty years, before we count ourselves to have attained.

2. Are we clear that the aim of moral-religious education is the perfection of the individual life, not in isolation,

but as a member of society, fulfilling all his obligations of influence, helpfulness and usefulness toward the common welfare? Traditional Christian doctrine and ethics have been too individualistic, treating people atomistically, on the assumption that *individual* character was ultimate. Of course we in part saw that personal character could neither be attained nor be efficient apart from social relationships, but we did not realize how completely *social* life is. We assumed that men grew up like so many isolated trees, each seeking height, strength and beauty without essential dependence upon the others. But instead we find that society is a vast organism, in which the individuals are respective parts, as Paul so finely describes it (1 Cor., Chapter 12); and each is to find his perfection in the perfection of the whole. "The body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body" (v. 12). "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (v. 21). "God tempered the body together, * * * that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care, one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (v. 24-26). The apostle here sees, in the light of the Christian principles of love and service, what science has carefully established by biological study.

Our moral and religious education needs to be built squarely upon the facts of social life as we now know them. An individual is not moral until he is social; that is to say, he is not good unless he is good to others, and to all others as far as his influence reaches. It is said of Jesus, in the tenth chapter of Acts, that "he went about doing good." That is the test of goodness—what one is able to do for the welfare and happiness of others. Do we not have, even in our churches, a more individual and conventional notion of goodness, amounting to little more than respectability, which allows a man to pursue his business or his profession with extreme disregard of the adverse effect of his conduct upon the welfare and happiness of many persons? Does it not devolve upon us to make moral-religious education through the Sunday school more fully and fundamentally *social*? Is it not imperative that we should develop the principles of social solidarity

and social justice in such a way that the term "Christian" can fitly be used only of those who *love and serve their fellow-men*, not by profession only but by conduct, not on Sunday only, but every day and all day?

3. Shall we not have in our Sunday school curriculum courses in social education for our young people that shall instruct and train them in a modern way for social living? The current progress in the social sciences, especially in biology, sociology and ethics, has put us into possession of a whole new body of knowledge and a whole new scheme of shaping life morally and socially. Present studies in poverty, dependence, disease, crime, social organization, industry, justice, make it possible for us to reconstruct our ideals, our methods, and in some respects our entire social order. We must and we can administer life much more effectively for the common good.

In working out the modern scientific living we shall not fail to avail ourselves of the principles, examples, inspiration and teachings of the Bible, but must look to modern literature for the scientific knowledge and guidance we need. In current books we are to make acquaintance with the facts of life around us, with the moral-social problems that confront us, and with the efforts that are now being made to lift all human living onto a higher plane. Life as we have to live it must be known from those who have studied existing conditions, and the way for us to live must be learned from those who have themselves achieved successful living under these existing conditions, so that they can point the way to others.

For the purpose of social study we already have some excellent courses and textbooks, for example: The Bible Study Union Course, "Christian Life and Conduct;" Jenks, "Life Questions for High School Boys;" Henderson, "Social Duties;" Josiah Strong, "The Gospel of the Kingdom." There are many books prepared for general reading and for school use that are suitable for Sunday school courses of study, such as Jane Addams, "The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets;" Devine, "Misery and Its Causes" and "The Spirit of Social Work;" Henderson, "Dependents, Defectives and Delinquents;" Nearing, "Social Adjustment;" Mangold, "Child Problems," and many others.

The study of the Bible prepares us for a study of these books on modern living, but it cannot be a substitute because the Bible of course knows and deals only with ancient life. Our young people are to live in the twentieth century, not in the first century. Our moral-religious education must therefore show what twentieth century life is, how they can best live it, and how they can best help others to right living. The social situation and the social conception of our time are fundamentally new, and can only be dealt with in a modern scientific way.

If our young people will stay in the Sunday-school long enough to take four years of high school work and four years of college work, i. e., if they will pursue Sunday school courses continuously until they are 21 years of age, then there will be time to give them both historical courses of study in the Bible and moral-religious courses in social living. But if they will not do these full eight years of work, and are not going to get social study in a regular college course, then it is more important for them to take social courses than biblical courses during the high school years in the Sunday school.

Would it not therefore be well if our Sunday schools should provide a double curriculum in the high school years (14-17 years of age): an *historical series*, which would call for a systematic study of Old Testament History, Old Testament Teaching, Jesus' Life and Teaching, and Primitive Christianity; and a *social series*, which in four annual courses would deal with the chief facts and problems of our social order. It would then be open to Sunday school boys and girls to choose whichever series or whatever courses would best meet their wishes, would best give them the knowledge and guidance needed for the direction of their lives. Into the social courses would certainly be taken up all the Bible teaching that is applicable and helpful to the social conditions and problems of today.