

Examinations on the Gospel of Luke.

The proposed examinations to be conducted by the American Institute of Sacred Literature, cannot fail to promote very greatly the study of this Gospel. Persons not acquainted with similar operations may wonder how such examinations can be held all over the country; but any one who knows Dr. W. R. Harper well needs no assurance, that the work will be thoroughly organized and effectively conducted in all respects. Few things are so much needed at present as that Sunday School teachers, and others who will soon become teachers, should learn how to study the Bible more thoroughly than has been common; and whatever promises to promote this result deserves hearty support and co-operation.

John A. Broadus

Louisville, Ky. Feb. 25, 1890.

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Mrs. Harper personally
presents diplomas to the
graduating class in the
Sunday School.

1902.



January 24th, 1902.

Mr. A. G. Lester,

5737 Madison Avenue, Chicago.

Dear Mr. Lester:

The President tells me that he will be at the Sunday School Sunday morning, and he raises the question whether, when the graduating class comes upstairs it ought not to be received with some formal ceremony. He is going to give them the diplomas downstairs. I am not sure whether they are to be received upstairs next Sunday, or the Sunday following, but will be glad to talk with you about this matter if you will telephone me.

Very truly yours,

W. R. Harper

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W. R. Harper

Sunday Schools

March 21st, 1902.

Rev. John L. Kilbon,
Newton Centre, Mass.

My dear Sir:-

I am very much obliged to you for your letter of March eleventh, and assure you that Mr. Votaw was simply speaking quite frankly. He did not know that I would send his letter to you. I am very glad indeed to read your letter and to see the matter again from your point of view.

Yours very truly,

W. R. Harper

March 21st, 1902.

Samuel J. Edwards

Rev. John L. Kilbon,
Newton Centre, Mass.

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Officers:

PRESIDENT,
JOSEPH KING KNIGHT, D.D.S.,
125 W. River St., Hyde Park.

SECRETARY,
JOHN LUTHER KILBON,
14 Beacon St., Boston.

TREASURER,
T. WALLACE TRAVIS,
8 Exchange Place, Boston.

Congregational Sunday-School Superintendents' Union

OF

BOSTON AND VICINITY

W. H. H.

Newton Centre, Mass. March 11 1902
Boston,

President W. R. Haffer,

Dear Sir:-

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Your communication regarding my Sunday-school lesson scheme came to hand in due time. I thank you for the attention you have given the matter, even by proxy, and return Mr. Dotaw's letter herewith.

I have waited for leisure to respond to that letter, thinking that, even if your time forbids giving further attention to the subject, Mr. Dotaw may be interested to follow the matter thus much farther, though the tone of his letter makes me somewhat doubtful as to that. In any case, I wanted the satisfaction of writing my reply.

I have been more unfortunate in making my meaning clear to Mr. Dotaw than to some others who have examined my work. What could have led him to suppose that I estimated that 57,000 churches would use this series at once, or even? The Congregational churches of the country number less than one tenth of that number, and the figure would probably include all the Baptist churches as well. The estimate was of the number of copies of the helps (all grades combined) which would be sold the first year. The number, so far from expressing "high hopes," is one which would simply give encouragement to believe that the publication would be profitable after two or three years.

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Boston, 190

The suggestion that more attention should be paid in grades 10-12 to group characteristics is just the kind of suggestion that I want to get. It appeals to me as practical and helpful. It strikes me, however, that the better method (for the Sunday-school) is to take the books separately and study the grouping and group characteristics afterwards. Notice should be taken that the aim of these grades is less critical than inductive. But that comes out of the general conception, of which more later.

I cannot conceive why it should be imagined that a body of advisors would necessarily cause a series to be a "hodge-podge". The idea I had in mind was to secure the reading of proofs by such persons as I mentioned. Some of them could make practical suggestions of improvement. As a matter of fact, some of the suggestions I have already received from people in no wise connected with theological faculties have been of the highest practical and theoretical value. Despite Mr. Votaw's idea and despite the fact that the rule with Sunday-school editors is otherwise to be stated, I am not so confident of my own wisdom as to be beyond the reach of suggestions.

Most surprising of all to me is it that Mr. Votaw has somehow gathered the impression that the Bible itself is not to be read until eleven years of age, and that it is not to be ~~the~~ sole basis of instruction until four years later. However it may be in Chicago, Boston children cannot read the Bible intelli-

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gently at eight years old, and the material and manner of the study in all the junior grades is such as to make condensations and here and there explanations of the Bible text necessary. Practically, therefore, the work of the junior grades is a stepping-stone to the use of the Bible. But granting that were this aim does not remove the criticism, there is nothing to justify the statements that "the Bible alone shall ~~not~~ be used for the Bible text not until the age of fifteen". Or does explanatory comment somehow make the Bible less valuable and comprehensible? If it does, why have Sunday-schools at all, or, for that matter, theological seminaries, institutes of sacred literature and the like? No place for fragments of the Bible text is found in the series as I planned it. All study of the Bible text after the sixth grade must be made from the Bible itself.

The criticism that stress of emphasis on the spirit of Jesus in teaching his life-work excludes attempts to make the power of that spirit evident earlier and in other ways, and all the similar statements in Mr. Votaw's letter, are so wide of my understanding of the matter that I find it hard to reply. I suppose that the best way to do so is to state my reasons for believing that Biblical instruction is the true aim of the Sunday-school.

I protest that there is a difference between enabling a person to use the Bible independently and intelligently and "cramming the child with as many Bible facts as possible". I believe that it is the Sunday-school's

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failure to grasp the specializing spirit of the age that accounts for its loosening hold on the respect and loyalty of young people. To attempt to cover all the ground of moral and religious instruction in an hour a week during the school life of our children is utter folly, from my point of view.

But the Sunday-school may be organized so as to do the most systematic and thorough work in that direction that any agency will do for the average child. It will do its work best when, recognizing that it cannot do all that ought to be done, it trains the child to know and love the Bible - the Bible not as history, not as literature, not as a theological or ethical treatise, but as a living book from which God's voice speaks to men's hearts. Such a specialization will at least make the Sunday-school more effective than it is now; and the Bible has power to complete the training of those who know and love it. For such training some - not very many - Bible facts are necessary, but most necessary is a real acquaintance with the contents of the Bible.

I suppose this difference is so radical that we shall not be likely to agree, but I could not forbear protesting against what seemed a misconception of my thought.

I am grateful both to you and to Mr. Votaw for the time and thought you have given to the matter. Sincerely yours, John Luther Kilbon

JOSEPH KING KNIGHT, D.D.,
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your mother but to you and to her father for the time and thought
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