

## P.N.E.U. IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

BY HELEN E. WIX.

### II.

I HAVE been asked to give some account of the second P.N.E.U. meeting, held for Sunday School Teachers in Canterbury early last November, as some others may be interested in the subject. In the first paper I tried to give a short account of how the P.N.E.U. method could be applied to Sunday Schools and a few of the people present had borrowed books and had tried the method "on their own," as it were, and they came to this second meeting full of interest and with a keen desire to continue on more definite lines. They had found even their slight attempts not unsuccessful; one teacher told us that even the little ones of five were all agog with interest and narrated short passages wonderfully well, even catching the "Bible style." This will, of course, be no news to us who belong to the Union, but it was just what was needed to give courage to some of the waverers there.

The difficulty in speaking to the meeting was rather great, as some people were there who had not come in the summer and to whom the letters P.N.E.U. were sealed mysteries. Anyone who has tried to answer in five minutes or less the question: "What is the P.N.E.U." will sympathise!

Next I tried to give a simple account of how to prepare a Lesson, using Dr. Paterson Smyth's "Genesis" (Bible for the Young Series). I took Lesson IV. on "The Flood."

To begin with it is most important to allow ample time for the preparation; a lesson well given is, as we all know, practically synonymous with a lesson well prepared. Various people will doubtless have different methods of preparation; I can only

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describe how I do it, without wishing in any way to suggest that it is the only way. Begin by reading the Lecture to the Teacher which prefaces Lesson IV., noting specially those parts of it which may be suitable for the age of the class. Then read the Bible portion set, i.e., Gen. vi., 9, to end and vii., 6, to end using the commentary and noticing any words which will need explanation in class (e.g., shittim wood, cubit). Then read the Lesson itself, with the Bible at hand to refer to. The whole Lesson, as given in Paterson Smyth, will be probably too long to be taken with equal detail throughout, and so one must now decide on which part to lay the most emphasis. Then there is a very good "picture" of the whole scene described in the Lesson—an open field on a sunny warm day, a busy throng of workmen hammering, sawing, etc., Noah and his son supervising and perhaps a scattering of jeering passers by. Having got the story part quite clear, the spiritual side of the lesson must next be pondered over. This is undoubtedly the most difficult part of the preparation, and the part which needs most time and concentration, for we must know it so well as to be able to stand aside at the lesson itself while the children do the thinking [sic], ourselves inconspicuously helping. The main thing to be aimed at is, that the children should learn a new idea about God; it is unwise always to draw only a personal lesson from the day's reading. In this case they can learn God's intense hatred of sin; that nothing was too terrible for Him to do in order to overcome sin. Older classes will remember sayings of our Lord showing His loathing for evil; they may realise that He suffered even death in order that

the enemy Sin should be destroyed.

Then, as the last step in the Preparation, put away the Lesson Book and go carefully through the whole of it again, giving it in imagination to the Class. (Excellent practice in narration for the teacher!) Go through each step of the Lesson: the connecting questions on last week's work; the finding of places, and explanation of words; the descriptive setting of the story (avoiding much talk and detail); the serious beautiful reading of the Bible; the brisk narration; the discussion and new God-knowledge, and then perhaps there might be time to read to the elder ones the extract from the Chaldean account of the Flood, given in the early pages of the Lesson book, letting them discover in what striking way it differs from the Genesis account. It is at this point in the Lesson, that is, when it is finished, that any good pictures [sic] may be shown to the class; to my mind it is best to keep them as special treats.

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Sometimes the portion of the Bible to be read is more difficult, and very hard to remember for narration. In such a case the preparation should include some thought on the "framework," as it were, of the chapter, so as to be able to point out to the class the main lines of argument. In time older girls and boys will be able to trace out the main thread for themselves, but at first they do need help, though only in the more difficult passages, as, for instance, in some of the prophets or in S. Peter's or S. Paul's sermons in Acts.

After the talk there was a splendid discussion and two or three schools have since started work. The Rev. R. B. Pyper, to whose initiative and energy the whole movement is due, then discussed with us the possibility of drawing up a syllabus of work, recommending books and setting subjects and Bible periods for study in the Sunday School. This syllabus is gradually taking shape and those schools which joined last Advent are now using Dr. Paterson Smyth's Genesis as the Lesson book and Pilgrim's Progress as the reading book. These are both being used throughout the school, but as a rule two reading books will be set, one for children under ten years old and one for those of ten and over. After Trinity Sunday the Lesson book will be Dr. Paterson Smyth's S. Matthew, and the reading books, Mackay of the Great Lake for the younger ones and Livingstone the Pathfinder for the elder ones. We hope to include in the syllabus (besides, of course, the Bible lessons) books on missionary work, two or three of Neale's splendid Church History stories, a book on Florentine painters, another on Church architecture, another on the story of the Bible, etc., etc.

It is to be hoped too that time will allow of poetry being read. Unfortunately no collection of entirely suitable poems seems to exist, but many teachers will have stores of their own favourites. It seems important to be widely catholic in one's choice, not limiting oneself to purely sacred poems.

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#### *Books recommended.*

Genesis and S. Matthew, by Dr. Paterson Smyth, 1/- each, or 2/- bound together, or can also be bought bound together, price 1/-, under the title "Calendar I., Church of Ireland Sunday School Lessons," the Depositary, 37, Dawson Street, Dublin.

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Pilgrim's Progress, cheapest edition 9d. (Partridge).  
Mackay of the Great Lake, by C. E. Padwick, 3/-.  
Livingstone the Pathfinder, by Basil Matthews, 2/6.

*For Teachers.*

The following may be useful:—  
Dummelow's One Volume Bible Commentary, 7/6.  
Sinai and Palestine, by Stanley, 1/3 (Macmillan).