

HOW TO TEACH  
*in*  
SUNDAY - SCHOOL

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THEODORE · E · SCHMAUK

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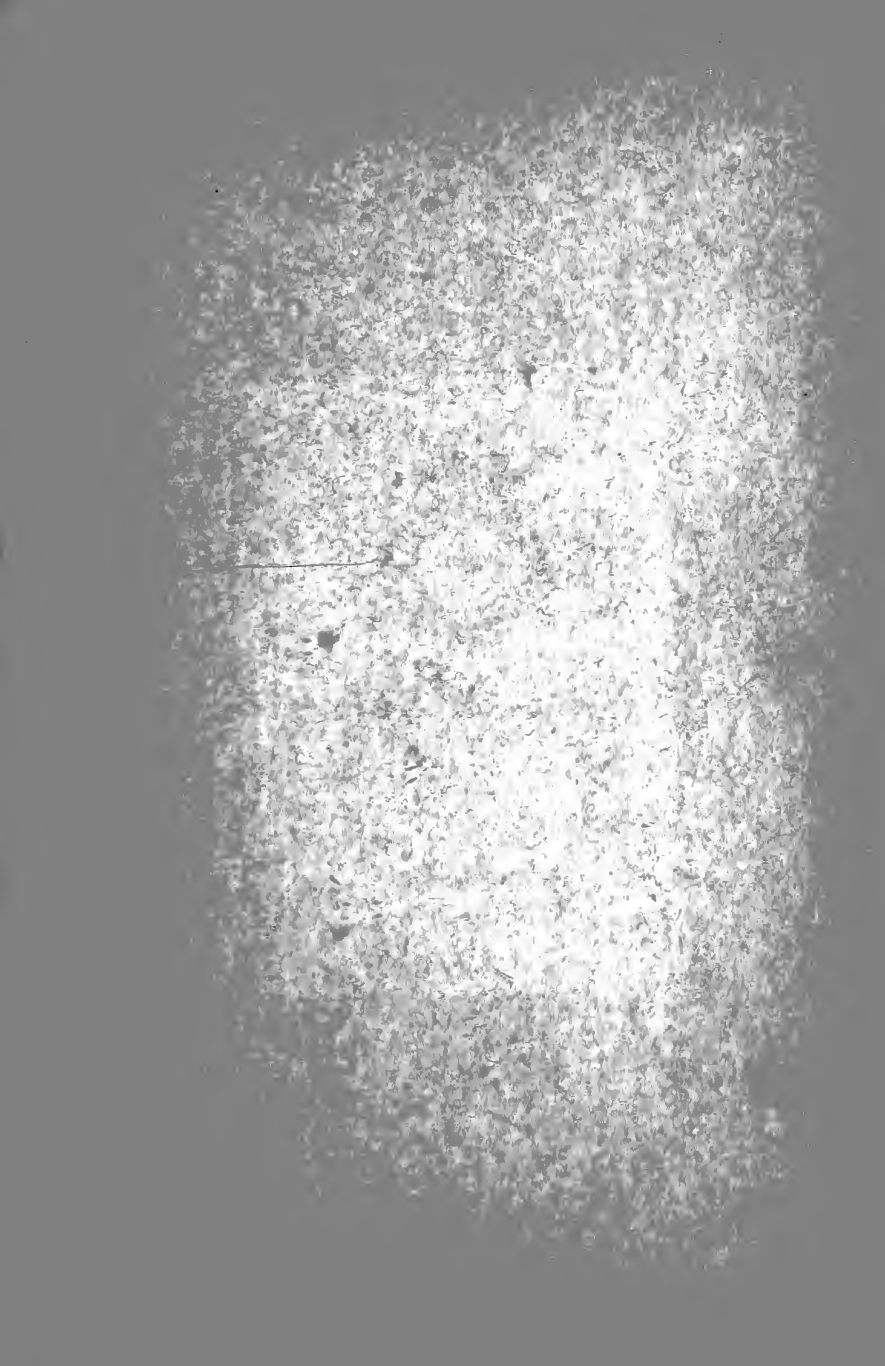


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TEACHER-TRAINING HANDBOOK

HOW TO TEACH IN  
SUNDAY-SCHOOL

By

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PHILADELPHIA

THE UNITED LUTHERAN PUBLICATION HOUSE

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This book is issued at the close of twenty-five years' experience in Sunday-School reconstruction in the Church, and is dedicated to our pastors and teachers and writers, our fellow-laborers in effort and in patience. It is written from an evangelical standpoint.

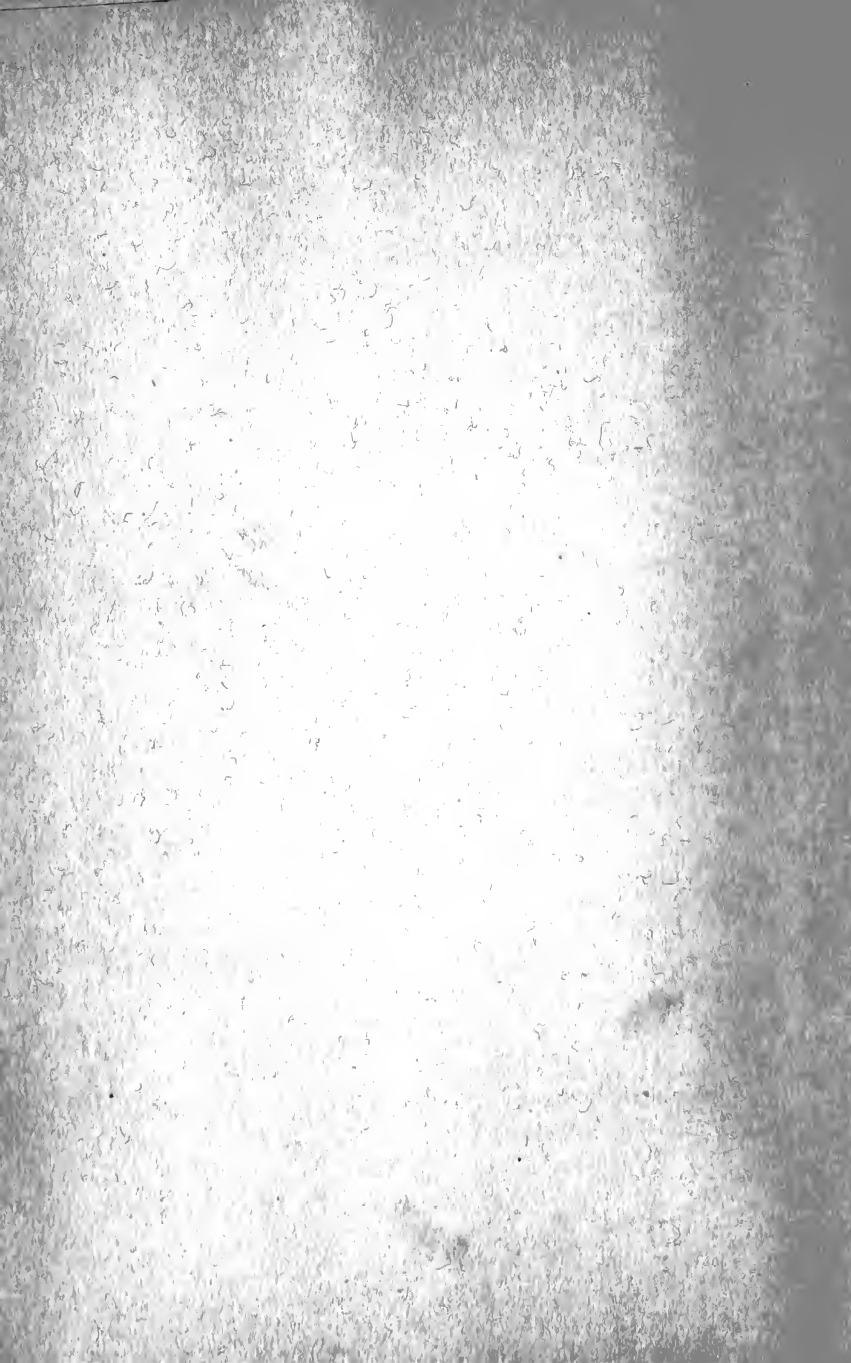
For a short and effective Teacher-Training Course, use Chapters 20-22. For a larger Course, add Chapters 11-18. If the teacher becomes interested, he will later find the whole book to be of value to him.

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# OUTLINE

- I. THE ART
- II. THE METHOD
- III. THE MATERIAL
- IV. THE ACT



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# How to Teach in Sunday-School

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## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING?

THIS fundamental question is not easy to answer. To teach is to instruct the pupil in the Word of God and in the things that a Christian ought to know. Its purpose is to strengthen Christian faith and character, and to prepare the pupil for his duties in the Church and in society. It is to help the pupil to fear, love and trust in God above all things, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

### TO TEACH IS TO HELP GROWTH

If you should desire a sweet and serious spiritual reply taken from the Bible, and filled with the charm of life, I should say that to teach in Sunday-School is to help your flock of scholars to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "Teaching is helping the mind in growing as well as know-

ing,"\* to which might be added "Training is helping the mind in doing, as well as in growing and knowing." †

It has been said that "hunger" is the best single word that will interpret child nature to a teacher. The living teacher seeks to cause growth by awakening and satisfying the scholar's hunger. He thinks in terms of nurture. All education must come back to this idea of response to need. It is the natural way to growth. Will your teaching respond to the hunger of your scholar's needy nature? Then you are shepherding the lambs.

Nurture is aiding the scholar to grow toward the ideal which God intends him to realize. Your teaching is to lead the scholar *to see* and *to do*; to vision and self-expression.

#### THE FOUR SIDES OF TEACHING

Patterson DuBois, in his book on "The Natural Way in Moral Training," under a biological conception of education, points to four kinds of nurture, viz., nurture by atmosphere, by light, by food, and by exercise.

Education by *atmosphere* is to nurture the feel-

\* H. T. Musselman.

† Phillips Brooks says beautifully, "He who helps a child, helps humanity with a distinctness, with an immediateness, which no other help given to human beings in any other stage of their human life can possibly give again."

ings. Our scholars' feelings are to be educated. They can be by direction, deflection and counter-action. Education by *light* nurtures their vision. To educate is to make truth visible, apt, vivid, wholesome. Education by *food* gives them material, for which they are hungry, to assimilate. Education by *exercise* is education by self-expression, and involves choice and will. There is no growth without exercise. Any education that represses self-expression and denies the initiative of choice, paralyzes the will, and prevents genuine growth.

#### TO TEACH IS TO FURNISH NUTRIMENT

The biological process of growth is attained through the giving of proper food. And we have the direct command \* of the Teacher of Teachers for our work, when He says to the apostle "Feed my lambs." If you ask where the food is to come from, and feel the need of a definition less vital and more intellectual, with the inclusion of a textbook, perhaps we may say that to teach in Sunday-School is to lead the pupil into the truth and life revealed for him in Scripture. "Search

\* Cp. our Lord's last great command to the eleven teachers He had trained: Go ye therefore, and *make disciples* of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

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the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." All the facts of Scripture converge in the one person of Christ. He is the center and sum of all that is to be taught from the Scriptures. "They are they which testify of me." Hence to teach is to lead the scholar into "the truth as it is in Christ Jesus."

### TO TEACH IS TO DEVELOP MANHOOD

If you look to the goal of Sunday-School teaching, I should say that the answer to our question is furnished by St. Paul when he tells us that God gave us pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

### TO TEACH IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS

Psychologically, to teach Christianity is to offer its facts and spirit to the pupil's consciousness in such way that they are recognized, tested if not self-evidencing, accepted in faith and imbibed with sincere conviction; and, as they are taken up and assimilated in reflection and practice, become regenerative and upbuilding elements in the other's faith, impulses, ideals, self-determination, character and service. To teach Christ and His Word is to prepare and offer the living truth as it is in Christ Jesus to the mind, heart and spirit,

so that it will take root there; and, in growing, will free, cleanse and transform the pupil's nature to its own divinely revealed and inherent ideals of perfection. The Sunday-School teacher leads the scholar into the Scriptures, where, with opened eyes, his insight into the acts of God in history, his faith in the redemption and teaching of Jesus, and his activity as a Christian and a member of the Church will develop progressively in response.

Gathering together these various points of view, I should say that to teach in Sunday-School is to guide the scholar into the Scriptures so wisely and intelligently at each stage of his development that his growth in saving faith, in accurate knowledge and in perfection of character may be steady and uninterrupted, leading to definite service, through the Church, for His Lord and for the world.\*

#### TO TEACH IS TO DIRECT THOUGHT

Using a mechanical simile, let us compare the teacher to a *chauffeur* who starts and guides his car. He pours in and stores the pupil's mind with the *materials* for generating spiritual power, *i. e.*, with the truths of God. He creates an *incentive*, a spark of interest in the mind. He

\* Cp. the latter part of this definition with that of Slattery, "Guide for Teachers of Training Classes," p. 1.

*touches* the spark *into action*. He thus gets the wheels of thought *to run*. With his hand on the lines of control, he gently *turns* and *guides* the moving mind and will in the right path and keeps it progressing to the goal. The teacher cannot mechanically pour knowledge into the scholar as the chauffeur pours stores of gasoline into the tank. He presents one truth at a time and gets the scholar's reaction on it. Justice is not done in the simile to the scholar's response and his self-initiative. "Education implies the power in the learner to originate thoughts and acts beyond those taught. Children have this power. God set it in their souls. Those that guide this activity are . . . teachers." \*

The simile of the chauffeur and his car fails also in not bringing out the intelligent co-operation of teacher and pupil in their common pursuit, and their mutual fellow-feeling and sympathy under the vitalizing warmth of possessing a common truth. The scholar is not a mere inferior, acting at the beck and call of the teacher. In these democratic days the teacher's appeal is to the common sense and courteous self-appreciation of obligation of the pupil, rarely to authority of office. His reliance is on the power of the truth in its effect on the pupil. He is the pupil's eye opener to the Scripture, the pupil's interpreter, prophet, counsellor and guide. The

\* "The Making of a Teacher," 1905, p. 1.



teacher gains and holds his leadership by intellectual, spiritual, moral and vital pre-eminence. His secret of control is the mystical tie of personal attraction and influence, and not the mechanical pressure of external authority.

TO TEACH IS A SPIRITUAL PROCESS

We have emphasized "growth *in grace*" as the object of Sunday-School teaching. Jesus Himself was "a teacher of human souls, not of human intellects." "Knowledge," says the writer quoted above, "dwells only in the realm of the spirit. We have not taught a thing when we have presented it to the senses. It is not taught until it is the possession of the spirit.\* . . . Books are but the scaffolding that a wise teacher uses to build a human soul. But the soul itself is the product the teacher must see from the beginning, not merely the materials with which he works." †

The goal in teaching is the awakening and growth of convictions and insights, of instincts and longings for what is godly, and of recoils from what is base. So familiar ought we be with our Scripture materials that what we say will always bear the impress of our personal insight. Heavenly promises, words and deeds from the heart of God; strong and mighty purposes, not mere details of mosaic, or rich fabrics uphol-

\* "The Making of a Teacher," 1905, p. 14.

† *Ib.* p. 6.

tered for effect, or dashing and splendid boldness in holding attention; is the main material in our art.

#### TO TEACH IS A PERSONAL ACT

Teaching is a toilsome process. It cannot be done wholesale. Men can clothe and feed the human race by machinery, but teaching will ever remain a matter of personal contact. In spiritual education we must get down to individual work. We may be able to plant and water in bulk, but we shall ever be obliged to weed and train by hand.

Luther addresses us teachers as follows: "All ye who teach the Gospel become, as it were, a threshing-machine, through which the harvests of the field are threshed." Yet it does not do to be grinding in bulk; nor to use the sickle when the wheat is still in blade. A destructive bent in teaching may be mischievous. To do to one's scholars' convictions what Pharaoh did to the firstborn of the Hebrew children, may be drastic, but is not wise. Hare pictures the result of such excessive severity of teaching in these words: "Strength is checked; boldness is curbed; sharpness is blunted; quickness is clogged; height is curtailed and depressed; elasticity is damped and trodden upon; early bloom is nipped."

In constructive teaching we train the scholar to search the Scriptures and help him to think out

what he finds there to such a conclusion as will influence his convictions and conduct. We interest the scholar in finding and appropriating the living seeds of eternal truth and eternal life which we call the Word of God. We nurture their growth. We pluck out the weeds of error. We root the scholar in Christ. We test the scholar's knowledge and keep him growing in mind and spirit, more and more unto the perfect stature of manhood in Christ.

Our scholars usually are Christians, often only nominally so. In many cases they may be incipient or very lively heathen. We meet all kinds and conditions of human nature in our work, and fortunately the one and only Word of God we use as our means of bringing results is applicable to all. The Christian scholar already in his Baptism, or through the influence of God's living Word, has been transplanted out of the kingdom of darkness into the family of God. Teaching develops and trains him in this new vocation.

#### TO TEACH IS A SIMPLE ACT

The work is simple, vital, requiring only one step at a time. The Church is the guide of the teacher, and should tell him what to do and how to do it; so that he need not shrink for fear the undertaking may be beyond his ability. No teacher who reads this book, if he takes time to study the Scripture, prays for the enlightenment

of the Spirit, possesses common sense, and a love for the work, should be disturbed by the ideals or the technicalities presented here, any more than a mother, who has been looking into a technical work on the chemistry of foods, should feel uneasy as to her ability to prepare a simple breakfast for her family.

#### TO TEACH IS A VITAL ACT

It is not learning nor technical skill that "makes" the teacher. It is power of conviction. Reality alone gives power. What are living teachers? asks Margaret Slattery. They are genuine, she says, like Jesus. He was real and therein lay His power.

"He was a real teacher because He had something to teach, something He believed would make men better and the world happier. He believed it so profoundly that He said it would solve all the problems of mankind. He was so glad to teach it that He sat on the mountainside, crossed and recrossed the lake, met His enemies in the synagogue, stopped on the highways and byways of Jerusalem, went to the feast and to the wedding—yes, even talked by the well with the woman of Samaria. All this that He might have the chance to teach, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'

He taught because He wanted to. No one drove Him forth, no one pressed His duty upon

Him, no one ever said, 'You ought to.' He said, 'I must' and so men listened to what He taught, women believed His message, and little children followed Him. For more than nineteen centuries men have been trusting their souls to what He said.

Yes, He had something to teach and taught it, eagerly, with enthusiasm and authority. The real teacher does that today, and he teaches with power wherever he is. The reason there is so much mechanical, empty teaching today, is just because men and women have nothing to teach. No vital, life-giving belief, no personal knowledge of the thing to be taught thrills their souls until it must be said.

When we have things to say, scholars will listen, because of the irresistible power of the living teacher, whose message springs from the depths of reality.

How many men and women everywhere in this world are living starved lives—the sympathies blunted by disuse, the emotions shallow and limited, capacity for deep friendships and large interests growing less every year. They are daily feeding their souls on the little, the petty, the mean in human life. If I am to be a living teacher, these things must not be true of me. I must give mind and soul food of the right sort, that I may daily take up my work with a spirit that is healthful, well-nourished and sane. Then

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the powers within me will cry out for exercise, and I shall plunge cheerfully into the work of my world with all that I am.”\*

### TO TEACH IS TO PLANT A SEED

The Saviour has compared the teaching process to sowing seed. The teacher is not only the sower, but by continuous contact and care, aids and fosters the growth. Under this image of our Lord, we may sum up the answer to our fundamental question, “What is Sunday-School Teaching?” as follows:

To teach is to plant a fact or truth or awaken an idea in the personality of another. The process is not helter-skelter or haphazard, but so that the fact will *firmly abide*, and the truth or idea will take root and grow. After the planting has taken place, there must be subsequent cultivation. To teach in Sunday-School is to plant Christianity in the mind and heart of the pupil. It is to plant and nourish the living Word of God in the heart of another. That is the whole story in a nut-shell.

God does not work with uniformity in nature in causing growth in forest, field and stream. Under one general law the adaptations are numberless. Some plants absorb nourishment and moisture through a thousand roots, and some through one. Some draw chiefly from the water,

\* Slattery, “Living Teachers,” p. 10, *sqq.*

and others principally from the air. The methods of causing soul-growth are as wide, as varied, and as full of individual life as are the methods of causing stalk growth through absorbing of food and moisture in the rootlet.

Teaching, then, is not a mechanical thing. Its work is to awaken thought as well as to lodge facts, to convey information that is dynamic, and to influence personality. To teach is to put the living Word of God into the people's souls. To teach is far more than to convey knowledge. It is not the knowledge *that informs*, but the knowledge *that catches hold* of a man, and cleanses, and turns, and revives, and puts a new spirit, a higher force into him, that will build men up. To rely on imparting *any* kind of knowledge to save the world is a delusion. The knowledge in religion that is of value is regenerative.

God's Word may be used as a text-book without touching a single spring of saving knowledge. The mere literary study of Scripture, and an acquaintance with the outer facts of the Bible, or with the elements of morality are not Christian teaching. Facts and dates and frameworks are as useful to the Sunday-School as the pail is to the housemaid's daily supply of water; but the teacher who furnishes them only is nothing more than a maker or mender or merchant of empty pails. To teach the Bible is not merely to present its facts, but to apply its power.

## TO TEACH IS NOT TO PREACH

Jesus was the greatest of teachers. He seems to have taught more than He preached. Many do not appreciate the distinction between preaching and teaching. It is a valid one. It is actually drawn in the Bible throughout. Preaching is a free lightning flash, traveling ever outward. Teaching requires a return wire to complete the circuit. The return does not travel through a universal medium like the air, but involves the use of a special wire to every mind and heart. The truth must run as readily on the return trip from scholar to teacher as it does in the original direction from teacher to scholar.

To preach is to proclaim and impress. To teach is to impart. To preach is to announce; to teach is to enforce. The best teaching is often done in a class of one to one. Preaching sets forth convincingly, declares with power, exhorts with fervency. Teaching shows the pupil how to understand in detail and to do that which has been set forth, announced, and declared with such convincing effect. After our Lord *discoursed* on the right and wrong mode of prayer, the disciples came to Him and said, Lord *teach* us to pray.

Teaching does not rest until the response is adequate. Unlike preaching, it does not simply attempt to cause another to know and to do; it does not merely implant a living and burning



knowledge in the soul; but it endeavors to ascertain in how far the knowledge offered has not been grasped. With a keen questioning instrument of steel it probes for the defective spots, and when it has found them, it repairs them one after another. Preaching is essentially a powerful presentation. Teaching is essentially a searching and probing process.

The word "Teacher" comes from the old English *taecen*, which means not to talk, but to *show how to do*. Teaching, therefore, is not merely proclamation or exposition; it is an actual showing how. The Anglo-Saxon *taecen* is closely allied with the German *zeigen*.

Preaching is reminding a man; teaching is helping him to remind himself. The whole theory of the *pulpit* is in the living testimony of the witness at the martyr's stake. The whole theory of the *school* is in the lisp and faulty reply called forth from the child on the mother's knee.

Teaching, then, is not lecturing. Dr. Johnson once said you cannot, by all the lecturing in the world, enable a man to make a shoe. As little can we, by lecturing our Sunday-School scholars, give the boys and girls a training in Gospel truth.

The pastor of any congregation is its head teacher. He is also its preacher. It may be more important that he should be successful in teaching than in preaching. His lessons to single souls may instruct, convince, and save more than his

sermons to many. In the church, as elsewhere, private and personal training is likely to affect more than public discourse.

### WHAT IS SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING?

The Answer.

The Answer Amplified.

To Teach Is :

1. To Help Growth.  
    Four Particulars in Growth.
2. To Furnish Nutriment.
3. To Develop Manhood.
4. A Psychological Process.
5. To Direct Thought.
6. A Spiritual Process.
7. A Personal Act.
8. A Simple Act.
9. A Vital Act.
10. To Plant a Seed.
11. Not to Preach.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OLD AND THE NEW IDEA IN TEACHING

#### THE NEW EMPHASIZES THE JOY OF SELF- EXPRESSION

THE new education is right and wrong. It lays emphasis upon the *joy* of doing as over against the drudgery of doing. It walks the old teacher, with his iron rod, out of the room; and says to the scholars, "Come, let us enjoy the delights of knowledge." It relies on the point of contact, for kindling intellectual zeal. It upholds the joyous spontaneity of childhood. When the boy comes into the class, he should not be expected to lay aside the freedom of his home and his plays. The aim of education is to bring the child to richer and freer self-expression. If any child does not learn, or is restless, or refractory, the new education, instead of advocating compulsion, sets it down that the teacher has failed to understand the child and to properly adapt the work to the individual.

In higher schools, the scholar is invited, through an elective system of studies, to choose what he will and to walk like a king through the gardens and palaces of learning. The will of the scholar and his interest and good feeling at

the moment are the teacher's only dependency.

The new way in education is a good thing. Joy in work leads to harder work and larger results, and children are not naturally lazy. If you give boys and girls a difficult game or a hard puzzle to solve, they will put no end of energy into the task. Every healthy youth is a storage battery of power waiting for opportunity. The scholar needs active work in which he is interested. Instead of "discipline and repression" the new education sets up the motto of "development and expression."

#### THE EXTREME OF THE NEW EDUCATION

All this is good, and is a great advance on the narrowness of the old time. But it is an extreme. One cardinal fact in human nature, and in this sad world of ours, is left out of consideration. This is the fact of sin. Our boys and girls today, no less than in time past, are born a perverse and stiff-necked generation. In bringing up children, we are not dealing with baby angels. Father and mother have discovered that. Satan quickly plows an avenue through the infant heart to corruption. Human nature is not a steady bit of energy which needs only "a little intellectual delight" to incline it to the good.

The new education has made things charming by putting "delight in doing" in the foreground. But it has done a sad thing in putting the word

“duty” in the background. Children are raised under the idea that only that which interests them and for which they have a natural attraction, is what ought engage their attention. They are left under the impression that no one has a right to impose on them anything from without. This is a background of pure selfishness from which the future activities of life are to spring. In so far, the new education is an extreme; and time will show that it is perhaps as evil as the other extreme of olden days in which the inclinations of the scholars were not consulted in childhood.

It is not what a boy or girl likes, nor even what he feels he needs, that should be our chief concern in developing his character. If Christianity amounts to anything, and “love of God above all” is the ideal of the Christian; and if the chief concern of our young people is really to be a “seeking of the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” then that system of education which depends for its results on the child’s own delight and pleasure, rather than on the law and the love of God in Christ, which the teacher is to bring to the child from without, and which are to be made the real potential factors within his development, is a failure; and will prove itself to be such as the generations go on.

#### THE EXTREME OF THE NEW EDUCATION

In this respect the new system of education is

wrong. It makes no proper allowance for the disinclination, the evil disposition, in human nature. It has no method of drowning the old Adam. It tries to *develop* the new man, instead of getting the heart, in Christ, to *put on* the new man. It assumes that all that is needed to educate our young people is the proper expression of their own inner nature. The old education failed in trying to impose a system of knowledge and power on the child; the new education fails in trying to develop everything out of the child's own inner nature. Both are wrong. As over against the old, we have learned from the new that education is self-realization. As over against the new, we ought learn, as spiritual creatures, that the starting point in education is regeneration.

We must unite the old and the new and avoid the evil extreme in each. We cannot develop a good manly character out of the natural materials as given in the boy. This is another way of saying "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." On the other hand, we also hold with the new education that we cannot preach or pound character into any youth. We recognize the great pedagogical fact that expression is a part of the process of acquisition.

#### RESPONSE MUST BE HAD

There is no effective teaching where *response*

on the part of the pupils is lacking. There is no impression without expression. The little child must not only learn a story, but tell the story in its own words, and work it out. The chief work of teaching is to lead the child not merely to recite from the mechanical memory, but to do gladly as it has been taught. One-half of the educational process lies in getting the pupil to transform impressions into acts. "If any man will do . . . , he shall know." The old method of preaching to children and applying numerous practical lessons, without leading the child into an exercise of its own powers of activity, produces the impression that religion is an external veneer to be acquired, not an inner spiritual life and faith and character.

Religious education is under investigation. Many churches meet the trying situation by giving up the one thing valuable in religion, which is the redemption in Christ Jesus. We should meet the situation not by putting the child into superficial touch with Christ, but by having His redemption vitalize and energize the process of teaching.

#### INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

Education is not chiefly instruction; but it is instruction and *training*. The congregation that establishes a Sunday-School and forgets the need of training in the Christian life, is not doing its

duty. We have a vital center of training in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. All that follows in the education of the child is a development by the Word of God of that divine seed. Our conception of educating children is central and vital.

Many Sunday-Schools practically overlook the need of co-operation in child training. Church and home, teacher and parent, must co-operate. A most important work is to instruct and train the parents. The teacher, the pastor, the deaconess are the ties that bind home and scholar with the school. If you do not know the scholar's home, you often cannot understand the scholar. A teacher out of touch with the home may do much harm.

#### CO-OPERATION IN EDUCATION

We know that you are too busy to become acquainted with the children's parents and homes. We know also that many mothers, with their household and social cares, have no time or will to make the teacher their friend. But this is a serious business. You ought find time, and you will not only receive God's blessing in such work, and gain much spiritual experience, but will begin unexpected and valuable friendships.

A child's health is a leading feature in its behavior, and should be taken into account in the treatment you give it. The mother knows more of this than any one else. A child's home often



determines the lessons and personal advice he needs, and the parents of your children should learn from you how earnestly you are trying to give these lessons, and for what purpose. You should be on good terms with the parents, so as to be able to explain if anything should arise in connection with the child's behavior or attendance. If home and school are divided in the principle of training, the child will accept neither as an authority. His faith and character may perish in the breach. It is sometimes a question which perhaps you should decide, whether you should retain in your class and mingle in your training the docile lambs of the flock, with the children of those homes where the will of the parent is not to be counted as on the side of the Church and the Gospel. Where the will of the parent can be depended on to support the will of God and the school, many matters of conduct and training can be remedied by a confidential conference, and by mutual co-operation between parents and teacher.\*

“If the child feels that his mother and teacher are friends, he is not so likely to prove trouble-

\*The public schools have recognized the force of these truths by the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations. Never has the State been so alive to child welfare in organized education and in social organization against unfavorable environment as it is to-day. The Church should be equally alert.

some to his mother's friends. In cases where the parents are dissatisfied they should do the teacher the justice of first seeing her and getting her point of view before passing judgment." \*

May God hasten the day when education and training of scholars will be taken up in earnest by His Church and School! May He turn our thoughts and care to this subject. May He hasten the abandonment of loose and careless methods by teachers who deceive themselves and the truth is not in them. May He solve for our poor perplexed teachers in His own time, the obstacles that press against them from the home, the playground, the public school, and the street, and that render difficult a normal Christian training in this enlightened age and this free land!

#### THE OLD AND THE NEW IDEA IN TEACHING

1. The Joy of Self-Expression. Electives.
2. Self-Centered Children are Not Baby Angels.
3. The Extreme of the New Education.
4. The Extreme of the Old Education.
5. Response in the Child.
6. Instruction and Training.
7. Co-operation between the various forces of Organized Education, including the Sunday-School teacher and the home.

\* McConaughy and Bartow, "Sunday-School Teaching and Management," 1916.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT WAS TEACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

It may seem startling to say that our Lord Himself was more a teacher than a preacher. But it is a fact. In all four Gospels the name usually given Him is "Teacher." The Greek word is "Didaskalos." It is translated "Master" in the Authorized Version of the Bible, but in the American Revised Version it is actually rendered "Teacher." He was called "Teacher" not only by His disciples, but also by such outsiders as the Pharisees and Herodians. When Nicodemus approached Him he used the recognized Jewish form of addressing a teacher, viz., "Rabbi." Nicodemus proceeded to state that Jesus was known to be a Teacher come from God.

#### JESUS WAS A TEACHER

It is true that our Saviour began His public ministry with the preaching or proclamation of the Gospel of God, but He soon proceeded, after He had gathered some followers, from preaching to instruction, and it was with this instruction rather than with preaching that the major part of His ministry was occupied.

One main part of His work was the instruction of the disciples in the mysteries of the kingdom

of God, its nature, laws and principles, and of His own relation to it. We read that He was in the habit of "teaching as one that had authority." We read that Jesus went throughout all Galilee "teaching and preaching." After giving His disciples instruction, He departed from them "to teach and preach in the cities." The elders came unto Him as he was "teaching." They said to Him, "Teacher, we know that Thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth." He told those that came out to capture Him that He had sat every day in the temple with them "teaching." When He entered into a synagogue "He taught there." When the people resorted to Him by the seaside He "taught" there. He "taught them many things by parables." He went round about the villages "teaching." He began to "teach" His disciples a lesson that was very hard for them to learn, namely, that the Son of Man must suffer many things. We are told by Mark that it was His wont "to teach the people." Luke tells us that He "taught the people on the Sabbath days." He tells His own disciples that the Holy Ghost shall "teach" them what they are to say in the future. While He journeyed toward Jerusalem He "taught" on the way. The people who shall stand without on the day of judgment will say to Him, "Thou hast taught in our streets." The high priest told Pilate that He "taught" throughout all Jewry.

Jesus says that His Father has "taught" Him and that the Holy Ghost will "teach" His disciples all things. When Luke begins the story of the Acts he does not write of our Lord as a preacher, but "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which He was taken up." The Apostles also, after Christ's ascension, ceased not "to teach and preach Jesus Christ both daily in the temple and also in other houses."

#### THE APOSTLES WERE TEACHERS

It is true that the Apostles testified and preached the word of the Lord in Jerusalem and in many villages of the Samaritans, but when opportunity presented itself they also taught this word as Philip did to the eunuch when he asked him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" preaching and teaching in the same moment.

The great preacher, Paul, in Ephesus taught the people both publicly and from house to house. The epistles of St. Paul show that teaching was an especial function of the apostolic church apart from preaching. He tells the Romans that they possess different gifts in their congregation, and distinguishes between prophesying, ministering, teaching, exhorting, giving, and managing. Though this list would not in itself be sufficient evidence that there was a definite office of teaching in the apostolic church, for the reason that the last of the functions mentioned by the Apostle in the

same connection, are of a general character, yet when taken with what the Apostle says in a similar passage in I Corinthians, the conclusion is clear. He says: "God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts." To the Ephesians, to whom Paul himself had taught in going from house to house, the Apostle says that God has given "some, apostles; some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints." Here it is clearly shown not only that the office of the teacher is a distinctive office, but that the pastor and the teacher are one and the same person, while the evangelist, whose function is to preach, is a different person.

In speaking to Timothy, the Apostle declares himself to be ordained a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher. He tells Timothy that the bishop or pastor must be a good teacher, "apt to teach." He also says that a special honor is to be given to the elders or pastors "who labor in the word and in the teaching," which perhaps may indicate that teaching was not carried on by all the elders. The apostle will not allow women to teach publicly in

the church (I Tim. 2: 12), yet he writes of aged women that they shall be "teachers of that which is good."

We see, then, how greatly both our Lord and the Apostles relied on the agency and method of teaching, after a congregation had once been established, for the proper growth and nurture of the people in spiritual truth and practice. The church today needs teachers as much as ever it did.

#### WHAT WAS TEACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

1. The Word "Teacher" as used in the New Testament.
2. Our Lord as a Teacher.
3. The Holy Ghost as a Teacher.
4. The Apostles as Teachers.
5. The Apostle's Injunction to Timothy.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN THE PASTOR AND HIS FELLOW-TEACHERS?

I HAVE assumed that the pastor is the congregation's head teacher. For the New Testament makes teaching a primal part of his vocation. A pastor who for any reason takes no interest in his school is to that extent no pastor. He should be in touch with the instruction and the spiritual life of the school. This is his particular vocation. His direction and authority should not be repressive, but vital. All the teaching should be under his supervision, and no truth should be taught without his consent. The Gospel he preaches, the faith he stands for, and none other, should permeate every channel of the school.

And is not the pastor responsible not only for the soundness of the teaching, but also for its success? It is his to see not merely that '*sound doctrine* is taught, but that sound doctrine is *taught*.' If he has not the teachers, let him make them. If he has good material, it can be trained. If he has bad material, he can improve it. This is his business. He is the teacher. A pastor who is not interested in his school, who is not given to emphasize the teaching side of his labors,



is wronging his Master, his work and himself.

There may sometimes be reasons why a pastor does not take any interest in his school. He may not be really wanted there. He may be made to feel, when he does come, that his views are of no account. Not long ago a correspondent wrote to me as a Sunday-School editor: "You yourselves" (meaning the pastors and heads of the Church) "have neglected us. You do not allow us to have the helps we wish, and do not teach us yourselves. Who is to teach us? *The majority of pastors in—*" (she mentions the city in which she resides)—"*never see the Sunday-School; much less have they time to devote to it.*" We wonder how such a charge can be true? It can best be discussed on the basis of actual conditions. Here it is sufficient to write large the fact that the pastor, by his commission, is the teacher.

Yet the pastor is not primarily a teacher of children. We do not anywhere read that Christ and His disciples spent their time in instructing little ones or youths—though He had time in abundance for blessing them—as indeed all earnest pastors now have for baptizing them. The pastor is the teacher of the adults of the congregation not less than of their children.

Surely the fathers are as much in need of being taught as the sons—sometimes more. The current conception of a teaching church, viz., one

that provides a school for the little ones, and for youngsters; and that believes when it has a good school for its younger people, it has done its duty, is faulty. To feed the lambs, and neglect the feeding of the sheep, is poor economy. Contrary to what is usually assumed and believed in our day, Christ laid stress on the feeding of the sheep—the big ones, I mean. This is the pastor's true work. The pastoral epistles show us that all—yes, and the adults especially—are to be taught.

As head teacher, it is not said that the pastor is to do all the teaching himself. The fact is, some pastors are not actually qualified as all-around teachers. Place them at the head of the primary department, or even in the midst of a latter-day group of boys and girls, and they cut a sorry figure. Does not the Bible tell us that teaching is a *gift*; and that it is given *to some*? Apparently not all preachers possess it. Nor is a good teacher for one kind necessarily a good teacher for all kinds of people.

I should not doubt that the grandmother Lois was a better teacher for *the little boy* Timothy than would have been the Apostle Paul, with all his inspiration! The minister's youthful daughter, though she know so much less of the doctrine than her father, may be a better teacher for little ones than the minister. It may be so with many a young girl. In that case, it is the

minister's business to prize the gift in another and to train it; to see that the gifted one is grounded more and more in the truth, to teach her to use her Bible, to prevent her from drifting into error, to test and guide her teaching powers; but not to push her to a side and try to do all the teaching himself.

Surely it is a blessing that the Lord has divided out the gifts in a congregation, and distributed them among many, and it is a vain, unwholesome and unscriptural assumption, if the pastor be persuaded to believe that he combines all the gifts and powers in his own personality. Where a pastor attempts to be the whole congregation himself—the business manager, or, as Paul puts it, “having the rule”; “the evangelist” or preacher; “the exhorter” or adviser and counsellor; the teacher; the almoner or gatherer and dispenser of beneficence, though he were—as he rarely is—a universal success in all these respects, he surely is suppressing many other people's talents and allowing much God-given energy to waste its fragrance on the desert air.

The pastor has the right to employ helpers. He has this right in the matter of teaching. It is impossible for him to attend to it in all its details as well by himself as he can with the aid of deaconess, parochial teacher or Sunday-School teachers gifted and trained for primary, intermediate and senior work. The pastor is respon-

sible for *all* the teaching, but he need not do *any* of it, except teach the teachers, if he can secure better results in that way.

A church with many good teachers is a blessing to itself, and to all the homes within its parish. Attend to the fountainhead, O pastors. Train the teachers. Train the parents. Then will the children be well-taught and trained. This, apparently, was the method of Christ, who trained the Twelve; and of the apostles, who trained their helpers.

#### RELATION BETWEEN THE PASTOR AND HIS FELLOW-TEACHERS

1. The Pastor is the Congregation's Head Teacher.
2. His is the Responsibility that there be Good Teaching.
3. The Pastor's Lack of Interest in the School.
4. The Pastor Not Primarily a Teacher of Children.
5. Adults Need Teaching.
6. The Pastor Not to Do All the Teaching Himself.
7. There may be Better Teachers than the Pastor.
8. A Church with Many Good Teachers is a Blessing.

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING?

THE purpose of the teacher is to make the Word of God clear and cogent. He is the interpreter for God. He is to find and plant God's Message. Hence he must be at home in what God has said in the Scripture. His teaching should have a Scriptural ring. It should be a fresh, suggestive, forceful unfolding of the text.

#### THE GENERAL BEARINGS OF THE PASSAGE

His first problem, in taking up a passage, is to get the intended sense. He must see what was the explicit thought as it lay in the mind of the biblical writer. This is the ground work of successful exposition. The passage is also to be considered as a part of the whole. A thorough teacher will have a grasp of the sweep of truth in the book from which the lesson is taken. From study and reflection he will gain familiarity with the background in which the scene lies.

#### THE PARTICULAR TRUTH

But his chief work is to penetrate into the inner significance of the Bible story or the text before him. He should search for the substance,

work himself into it, and bring up into the clear light what lies hidden there. After comprehending its historic sense, he should detach its inner ethical and spiritual suggestiveness for human nature in all times, and for his scholars at the present moment. It is this ability to get at the real meaning, and to transfer its values to the people before him that makes the successful teacher. To furnish these two things, the historic and its bearing on the present; the literal and the poetic; truth for the understanding, and truth for the imagination; fact for our sense of reality, and principle for our practical guidance; the Word as God gave it, and the Word as God means us to apply it, is his aim.

It is not always easy to seize the real message in the lesson. This requires a penetrative insight, and a devout imagination. One must be able to live in two worlds, the world of the text and the world of today, and to transfer the life, vital power, and spirit of the one, as a lesson, to the other. One must be able to reach a clear understanding of the central thought of the text, and seize and apply the principle it contains.

#### THE PRESENTATION

By this penetration of our insight, our imagination, and our sympathies, we shall open and reveal the kernel and not merely be presenting the outer shell. Facts and truths are important

in themselves because they give us definiteness and certitude. But they often are of little value in *moving* our heart and mind. We must approach our hearers through their sympathies and must ourselves possess a trained and delicate sense of ethical and spiritual realities.

The man who has spent a world of study, of reverent meditation, of thoughtful contemplation, on the Gospel history, who has received and imbibed *the spirit* of the life of Christ, reaches a vivid apprehension and delicate sympathy with Him, and a skill and persuasiveness in interpreting His teachings and life. Instead of going to the Word with views already made and second-hand, he has opened his heart to the shining of the Truth, patiently receiving impressions from it, quietly and reverently listening to it, continually growing under it, and thus becomes illuminative when he begins to apply the result of his meditation to the pupils before him.

#### THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Through great familiarity with Scripture, we gradually grasp the underlying principles of revelation. Particular truths gain a new meaning by reason of their vital relation to other and larger truths. We discover inner relationships and meanings that fairly open our eyes. This is an afflux of power, and is different from a familiarity with history, and theories of authorship, and

dates. We gain a knowledge of the root thoughts of Scripture and are able to make these the keynote of our teaching.

Our power will lie in the possession of fundamental principles. Whereas other teachers "bring human life as illustration to the interpretation of Scripture," we are now able to "bring Scripture to the interpretation of life." Whereas others are familiar with the world of affairs and of men, and find its experiences a vindication and verification of Christian truth, we are students of Christian revelation and of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and find here the realization and interpretation of all that is truly human. We shall know the deepest inner meaning of Christ; know it as containing the root principles of all human life, and thus we shall have come upon the key to our own human experiences, the key to all truly human life.

These principles of Christianity in God's Word we should seek to apply to the times and the lives of those whom we are teaching. The spiritual always lies beneath and conditions the social, the economic, the scientific, and the larger problems of the day. If we grasp in the Scripture the fundamental spiritual principles of these problems, we can often instinctively apply them even in realms with which we are not so familiar, with the confidence of the truth that has made us free.



In order not to lose ourselves, or our masterhold on our foundation, and not to go drifting among the speculative and practical issues of the moment, it always is well to stick closely to the Scripture. This is the advantage of the textual teacher as over against the topical teacher. The textual teacher finds the relations of things in the Scripture before him. The topical teacher, who probably is not so familiar with the inner and vital organism of the Scripture, finds the order and relation of things in his own mind, and is more liable to go astray. \*

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING?

1. To Make the Word of God Clear and Cogent.
2. The Teacher is the Interpreter for God.
3. He Must Get the Sense of the Scripture to be Taught.
4. He Must Penetrate to its Inner Significance.
5. He Must Grasp the Underlying Principles of Revelation and Bring them to the Interpretation of Life.
6. He Must Apply Principles of Christianity to the Times and Lives of Those Whom He is Teaching.

\*Some of the ideas in Chapters V and VI have been suggested by a writer in another sphere, whose name is beyond present recall.

## CHAPTER VI

### REMEMBERING THE PURPOSE WHILE TEACHING

#### IN SELECTING A BEGINNING

THE purpose will help us to choose the best way to begin. The teaching may begin with the concrete historical material of the text to clear the way for discussion. It may be an explanation of the circumstances under which the writer came to say what he did. This will open up the inner connection of thought, and show its continuity. Or the teacher may begin with a verbal explanation, interpreting the meaning of the key words.

Or he may open by drawing a contrast between what is commonly thought in the ideas of the time and between what is the Scriptural truth in hand. Or we may start by clearing away difficulties that seem to bristle in the Scripture, and thus reveal and open the pathway to a discussion of timely truths.

Or perhaps we may first point out *the importance* of the truth and at the very start awaken an interest in its application. Thus the discussion will attach itself directly to the Scripture, and our teachings will be a presentation of the substance of the text. Still again, the teacher may draw the principles from the text, and then re-

state them in a discussion or summarize them in the order of their importance for application.

#### IN SELECTING THE TRUTHS

In all these cases, he will be teaching from within outward. The teacher will be a real interpreter of Scripture. He will first interpret the inner significance of the truth in the Scriptural lesson and then apply it. A teacher thus will avoid wearying his hearers by dwelling too frequently on favorite ideas in his own mind, and the scholars will feel that he is dealing with the actual realities of Scripture, and making the *Word of God itself* attractive and fruitful.

It is well to remember that our own ideas about religion are not religion. Christianity is something given outside of ourselves and our thinking. It is revealed in the Scripture. Christianity is a religion that may and must be taught. It is not only an inner experience, but has been an historically planted fact. It should be interpreted therefore not merely as an expression of pious feeling, but as a body of historic truth. It is something that God has revealed. It has an authority beyond our own thoughts. It is life that springs up from within, but it begins as life that shines down from above. In order to nourish the life that springs up from within, the teacher must furnish an abundance of light that shines down from above. The teaching will then

take hold of the heart and conscience of the hearers. It will awaken a wealth of spiritual power and life. On the solid basis of truth revealed in actual fact, it will profoundly move the scholars.

#### IN CLEARNESS OF PLAN

Such a result will not come from a few mere glances at the lesson. Haziness of apprehension will produce indefinite results. We must use every effort to clear, keen thinking. We must exercise our powers of intellectual discrimination and analysis. We often must struggle and wrestle for the possession of the truth, and then must so order it that it will be perceptible to others. Our teaching should not be a mere speech learned by heart. It should have a plan in which the thoughts are reduced to method beforehand, and the words can then be left to utter themselves. Thus the entire movement of our mind will be distinct and clear, and will appeal easily to the mind of those who are listening to us.

Our purposes and subject of discussion should generally be clearly stated at the outset, and then restated at appropriate points in the course of the discussion. Time will not permit us to be complete in discussion, but no matter how fragmentary we are obliged to be, what we say will be stimulative to the thoughts of others.

## IN CONFIDENCE WHILE TEACHING

We sometimes underrate the intelligence and the thinking of our scholars, and do not appreciate the extent of their reading and the many varieties of views which they have heard. But if we ourselves have made an honest and thorough study of the Scripture before us, and presented it methodically, we need not fear any comparison that will arise in the minds of scholars with other views that they have read or heard.

And in all cases we shall have the rich satisfaction of not merely having presented a temperamental message from ourselves, but of having acted in full honor toward our trust as commissioners bearing the message of salvation from God.

REMEMBERING THE PURPOSE WHILE  
TEACHING

1. How the Teacher May Begin.
2. He Teaches from Within Outward.
3. Christianity is a Fact Given, but a Fact that Moves the Heart.
4. The Teacher Must Do Clear Thinking.
5. His Purpose as Based on Scripture Should be Evident at the Outstart.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PROCESS OF TEACHING AS A MOVEMENT

TEACHING must begin at some point and proceed forward till it comes to the end. It is a *personally conducted trip* through the lesson. It is a tour. It carries one purpose through many scenes. It should be "conducted," but not too rigidly. It should be guided, but not officiously. You are the stroke oarsman and steersman, but you need a velvet rather than an iron grip.

With your little, and we hope, expectant company you embark upon "the wandering stream that shines between the hills." You sail through many a winding vale and meadow. Far off you descry the mountain tops, those silent pinnacles of purest snow standing in the rosy flush of the sunset, as your distant goal. This is no time for eating peanuts and cracking jokes. This is the hour of the open eye and exalted heart. For

"Oars alone can ne'er prevail  
To reach the distant coast.  
The breath of heaven must swell the sail,  
Or all the toil is lost."

#### I. THE START

The first thing to do is to start. To cross the line, and thread the tugs and piers, and glide

buoyantly into the heart of the stream, is not as easy as it looks. This first move of yours pre-determines the point at which you will strike the main channel, and conveys to all a sense of direction and progress. We offer a few words of advice.

1. The immediate object of your opening words is *to catch your scholar's attention*. To run afoul there, is probably to fail in the whole lesson thereafter. It is not difficult to catch momentary attention. The secret lies in so catching it that you will hold it through to the end, and that, in catching it, you do not introduce sensationalism. Sensationalism is attraction, but with a number of powerful picture elements in the complex, that allure into side paths, instead of holding the mind on the main track, thus distracting it in the very act of attraction. No image or sense-truth which is sufficiently powerful and alluring to hold and bind the scholar under its own spell, instead of passing him on, through an open gateway, into the charm of the higher truth of which it is an example, is safe to use in attempting to awaken a scholar's interest in the subject. Many a good lesson meets with a tragic fate when you bring your deeply interested scholar to a climax in the side-shows, and you are unable to stir him out of them, to proceed, with further expectancy, to your real destination. Get a beginning that will not only *draw*, but will *continue to draw* him

into the main line of your progress, and thus hold his mind to the end.

2. Another object in your beginning may be *to make clear* to the scholars' minds *what you really intend to do* with the lesson, to light up your plan and purpose in such a way that they will ever know, from point to point, what you are aiming at, and will have an intelligent comprehension of the various steps through which you are leading them.

3. The first and lowest stage of success in beginning is to have prepared to hold your scholar's attention to the end, and to have induced him patiently to follow you as a leader. A second and higher stage of success is to have induced him not merely to follow you in your leading, but to *participate with you in your thinking*. Let him do the rowing while you mark the time. Get him to love to "cut with his golden oars the silver stream." Here his mind co-operates in sympathy and freedom with yours, and there will be delightful and constant companionship throughout the voyage.

4. The third and highest stage in beginning your tour is this: You have induced not merely participation, but have brought out *independent activity* from the scholar's mind. If he takes positions and establishes convictions of his own under the course of teaching; if his spirit has reacted so completely from your teaching that



it is forming conclusions on its own account, even if they be, occasionally, against your own, you will have reached your highest success. He will then have been

"Taught to steer  
Though neither day nor star appear."

5. Now do not think, from all that has been said above, that the act of beginning a lesson is a formidable thing, and that you must weigh and measure and calculate—and hesitate—before you plunge in. Very often *your instinct* is a better guide than your judgment or your deliberate reason. Your instinct will enable you to make introductory adjustments between your scholars and the lesson without your ever knowing it. Do not worry about which of several plans is best in approaching the lesson. Simply make the start as would be natural to you when telling a story in your ordinary conversation. Plunge right in. Take the leap. Even if the water be deep, you will come up to the surface again, alive and swimming. You will learn to float comfortably on a full sea, and take the current when it swerves. You may even come to find yourself flying high into the breeze where sea-gulls toss and shriek.

6. Every one, even the trained teacher, is apt to feel a little awkward in making the start. You must *have faith* in yourself, or rather, *have faith*

that God will see you through. The best work is done without that miserable self-consciousness—which so often rises to plague and annoy us, and render us nervous. The locomotive engineer does not keep emphasizing to himself either his own ability, or the possibilities of disaster, when he lifts his hand to move the throttle and start his train into action. He simply takes hold and goes ahead. Put on steam and leave the rest to Providence.

7. At times it is well to begin by making a preliminary clearance of difficulties. Perhaps you do not need to gain the scholars' attention. You may have it. They may be all attention. They may know you well enough to feel that your lesson will surely interest them. Or they may be so faithful as to have a stock of patience in reserve, and to meet you more than halfway in the theme you have to develop. (But do not presume too long on this.) Should you feel it desirable to use your beginning for the clearance of difficulties, or for any other tedious necessity, be brisk and swift in cutting your pathway. Do not dwell on introductory detail. The great river's dim expanse is still before you.

## II. THE MAIN CURRENT OF THE LESSON

The watershed and the margins of a stream drain toward the centre. You must know where the strong flow of your lesson is found, and get

into it. Then your bark will *fairly glide* down the stream, and you will escape sands, miseries, rocks and shallows. Your cargo of heavy truth will not hold you back. Put your strength into the great doctrines, and not into trifles. Make the trip profitable and epochal. Your class will follow you into the great actual realities. They will feel the thrill of the mighty power into which they are advancing. They will learn to love "those old sides of seared timber, all ashine with the sea, as they plunge and dip into the green purity of the mounted waves."

### III. THE TRIBUTARIES

We cannot fully explore the tributaries and side-branchings of the lesson. We might get lost. We might dry up at a shallow bend, or be whirled about in a circle by an eddy near the shore. The object of exploring and using tributaries is to add local color, to furnish concrete detail, to lend intensity, to multiply interesting examples of the general principle, to gain a first-hand knowledge of original constituent parts. But if you allow yourself to be long detained in the tributaries, you will be overtaken by night, and perhaps stranded in the upper reaches of the stream. You never will reach the mouth. We find many brave teachers sitting still and desperate at the helm of their helpless boat, "through starless night and hopeless dawn." Remember, that you are ex-

pected—yes—*obliged* to throw out the gang-plank and unload your passengers on *schedule time*. When the bell rings you must be steering *into port*. You cannot keep your scholars on board. The main thing, after all, is to have reached the destination in the given time, and to have your class know that they have come to the goal, and feel impressed with the conclusion of the trip. They will not thank you, or feel satisfied, if you must say to them, "Alas! we shall have to stop right here in the middle of the stormy lake."

We are speaking to teachers who see the wealth of truth lying in profusion about them, and are tempted to dwell too long at interesting points by the way, and to wreck the voyage by failing to heed the time limits within which the excursion must be conducted. On the other hand, there are teachers conspicuous for paucity of idea, for lack of imagination and for inability to comprehend detail, who shoot the class right through to the end after a few minutes' activity. They have skimmed over the surface and gotten through. To finish the journey quick they have lightened the vessel by throwing the cargo overboard.

#### IV. STEPPING ON SHORE

The application of the lesson is dwelt on under a separate head. Suffice it to say, that the class should reach the shore with a sense of gain, with greater confidence established in the vessel and

the teacher, with an eager determination to utilize the cargo they have brought back, and with gratitude to God for the wonders of the great deep and the privilege of having sailed it.

A little speed, and glow, and intensity of effort in the last moments, when the end is in sight and opportunity culminates, will add to the final impression, and it will be with great satisfaction that they feel the boat come gliding in to beach.

“Courage!” he said, and pointed toward the land,  
“This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”

#### THE PROCESS AS A MOVEMENT

THE START.—(1) Why is the first stroke important? (2) What is the important object of the teacher's first words? (3) What danger is frequently present? (4) Explain at length why striking language may be dangerous. (5) When is it conducive to the purpose? (6) What other object may it be important to keep in view at the beginning of the lesson? Why? (7) What is a third and even more important object? (8) What spirit do you desire to evoke from your scholar in the preparatory stages of the lesson?

(1) In what way should one begin, and in what way should one not begin, so far as one's own feelings are concerned? (2) On what inner help can you generally rely to get yourself started right? (3) What outer result have you noticed as following a direct and unembarrassed plunge into the work? (4) What, best of all, will see you through the lesson?

(1) What is still another object to be held in view as a possible desirability in beginning the lesson? (2) What is the danger here?

**THE MAIN CURRENT.**—(1) What is the first thing to seek after you are started on the lesson? (2) What will you then escape? (3) What is the strength of Christianity?

**THE TRIBUTARIES.**—(1) What is the use of side-branchings and side-lights on the lesson? (2) What is the great danger in this use? (3) Explain the inexorable limitation under which all lessons are taught. (4) Describe teachers who reach the dock too far ahead of scheduled time. (5) What have they sacrificed to make a speedy journey?

**THE STEPPING ON SHORE.**—(1) With what feeling should the scholars, so to say, step on shore at the close of the lesson? (2) What inner characteristics may the teacher properly display in this culminating moment?

## CHAPTER VIII

### TYPES OF TEACHING

ONE can travel to the goal by many different roads. There are various types of mind in the world. No two teachers, if they allow their mentality and spirituality to work freely, will choose exactly the same plan. One's individuality appears in all good teaching. *Your own* gift, the one God gave you, is your individuality. You should use it. It doubtless has been modified by some experience that you have had, by lectures that you have heard, by normal courses that you may have taken, by books that you have read, and by a comparison of notes with other teachers.

The Sunday-School system which your Church has provided, or the text-books and teaching quarterlies that are in use in your school, have had to adopt some elements of method, and in your attempt at conformity to these, you have been influenced favorably or unfavorably. The minds, age, and disposition of your scholars have also, often unconsciously, helped to make you the kind of teacher that you are. If you were asked to describe the type of teaching that you have settled down into as a result of your own gift and of all these influences, you probably would be unable to give a correct picture of

yourself as a teacher. But that type which is in you as a gift, which is most natural for you in your intellectual dealings with young people, should usually constitute the basis of your method.

We may perhaps sum up the different types of teacher as follows: (1) the Dramatic Mind; (2) the Interrogative Mind; (3) the Descriptive Mind; (4) the Mind that leans to the use of Recitation; (5) the Mind that loves Discussion; (6) the Mind that presents material in the form of a Lecture; (7) the Co-operative Mind, which desires that teacher and pupil both share actively and freely in the effort to get results; (8) the Mind that loves Research. As additional sub-types which may crop out at any point, we may mention the Illustrative Mind, and the Hortative or Paraneitic, or Applicative Mind.

#### I. THE METHOD OF STORY-TELLING

First of all, and incomparably superior, is the teacher who can tell a story. The first priceless gift, especially in teaching little ones, is the ability to tell a living story. The good story-tellers of the world have been few, and have carried the power of life with them whithersoever they have gone. Often they have wasted and abused their gifts, but on the thread of a story there hangs and to it clings the most lasting instruction that the world's classics ever have been able to im-



part. And whether it be Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, Aesop, Plutarch, Chaucer, Dante, Shakespeare, Schiller, Hawthorne, Hans Andersen or Kipling, their ability to leave a permanent result has been pinned to the thread of their story, and their power of instruction has depended upon the charm with which they have been able to invest their tale.

To be able to tell a story to tiny minds, so that the rootlets of the soul will drink it in, and sprout and flourish and grow, is a rare and priceless gift. To rid the story of all encumbering clumsiness and indefiniteness, and inwoven abstraction; of all deadening and delaying explanation; of all superfluous detail, and to present it, crystal-clear and sharp, small, spherical and complete, as a glittering dewdrop upon a rose leaf, is wondrous art.

The teaching of the Lord Jesus thrills and gleams with precious tiny stories of this sort. The Pearl of Great Price, The Hidden Treasure, The Leaven, The Mustard Seed, The Lost Sheep, The Two Sons, The Fig Tree, The Two Servants, The Lost Coin, The Rich Fool, The Friend at Midnight, The Unjust Judge, The Straight Gate, The Good and Corrupt Tree, The House Built on the Rock, are a few of these complete but tiny dewdrop crystals.

Some stories suit every age and fancy, and time. Some stories are so complex in plot, and

so laden with incident, that they appeal only to the well-trained mind. But for little children, it is the tiny and direct tale, the flow of the single rill of fresh and sparkling water, that is the thing. The teacher who knows how to tell the Saviour's stories, and the stories of the Word of God, is a teacher indeed; and, for certain stages of growth, is superior to one thoroughly experienced in the catechetical, or interlocutory, or comparative, or descriptive method.

A story well told will do its own work, and will be active in the soul for life. This is one secret of many of the Saviour's parables; and one reason why He did not often cumber them with explanations.

But there are ages and stages in every pupil's intellectual life when his most successful mental growth will require that *he* do the work. A pupil too richly fed with stories will come to the point where his future development requires a change of diet. The receptive mental process of listening needs to give way to a more active process. While, possibly, up to this time, the scholar has not been capable of instituting an initiative of his own, and of reacting powerfully and independently on the material furnished him, this cannot remain so. The growth of his soul would be very weak and flabby (as indeed it often is in Sunday-Schools), if the pupil remained forever purely a listener. The process

of absorption must give way in the scholar's soul, before the more active process of assimilation and reproduction.

## II. THE INTERROGATORY METHOD

By *asking questions* that lure the child to full expression and by inserting questions at any point that will reveal to the child an error in his thinking and bring him into a correct apprehension, the teacher, instead of confining the main activity of the lesson to himself, gets the child's own mind to be the primally active factor, and this is enormous gain. For whatever the scholar does himself, turns him from a mere listener, and from passive receptivity, into an active creator. The result, instead of merely conveying information, stirs up interest and the sense of power. The skilful questioner reaches to the goal of life as well as of truth. By *deft and indirect suggestion of ideas*, by the *introduction of natural life contacts*, by *throwing the soul back on its own resources*, by *swiftly bringing it face to face* with its own unexpected self, by *stimulating it* to activity in a useful, but hitherto inaccessible spiritual region, by *getting it to move forward, and conquer* and appropriate with all the intense delight of an original explorer, the teacher transforms the receptive pupil sitting at his feet. Here the subtle and magic influence of a living personality comes powerfully into play. Ideas are

freed in the child's soul, and rendered motile, that will set it to make its own discoveries and draw its own conclusions. The teacher who can thus enter the mental and spiritual life of his child with the magic touch of life and action, will transform structure after structure, habit after habit, and principle after principle; and, if care is given to the new growth, will be a far more effective instructor of the Word than the most charming teller of stories.

Our Saviour used this method frequently, in dealing with those who came to Him to be taught, although the fact that their minds were already mature, and their outlook established, more than once caused them to turn from the flood of new light and truth that were thus poured into their soul. Nicodemus is a striking illustration of one who was dealt with by the great Master according to this method. After sitting at the feet of the Son of man, God and the world and all religious life were new to him. The young ruler was another instance to whom this method was employed, and it was so unpleasantly effective here that the rich youth sorrowfully put himself beyond the reach of its suggestiveness. But what might perhaps be considered the standard instance of this method of teaching, was the dealing of Christ with the two disciples in the walk to Emaus. From the time that He drew them out of their deep preoccupation with the question,

“What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another?” to the point when He stirred their souls to the dawn of a new truth with His question, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” he opened all the Scriptures to them in such a way that their hearts began to burn.

### III. THE METHOD OF DESCRIPTIVE PORTRAYAL

The third type of gift in the teacher is the ability to Fix a Scene on the Memory. This is the descriptive art. The teacher dips his talk in colors, and portrays a landscape. He places a charming picture before the eye of the pupil. This method is not the same as that of telling the story. The story is a moving drama linked together by verbs of action. The scene is a portrayal of still life whose attraction lies in adjectives of description. In scene portrayal the story element is rarely absent. But, from the story point of view, the instruction in a scene portrayal is often meager, bare, and unsatisfactory. The story proper runs direct to its goal. The instruction in a scene must be gathered by pointing out and applying the moral in the details. Both the telling of a story and the portrayal of a picture may lead up to climax. In the case of the story, it must be so. In the case of the scene, it need not be so. What more perfect scene could there be than the picture of our

Saviour resting at the Well in Samaria, and addressing the Samaritan woman? But the difficulty of making an effective story out of that scene especially for children, is that both the action and the climax are overshadowed by the description, which is the predominant element in the situation and also in the conversation. *There is* a climax in the Saviour's conversion of the Samaritan woman, but it is not the part that dwells permanently in the mind. The mind stays by the Saviour seated at the Well and feeds itself with His utterances and their results.

The Gospel of Luke furnishes two striking instances of a good story in which the action lingers in the richness of the scene by the way, rather than comes to an increasing climax in the finale. The one of these is the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and the other the Story of Dives and Lazarus. Both of these are told in the pure story form, and with not even a concluding moral. But in both of them we linger rather in the middle than at the end of the tale. In the one case it is with the Prodigal going forth and returning to the open arms of his father, and not with the explanation of the father to the elder brother at the close. In the other case it is with the death of Lazarus and Dives and the scene of their awakening in the other world, rather than with the dialogue between Lazarus and Father Abraham at the close.

The teller of stories is an actor in the good sense of the word. The teacher of scenes is an artist. Both lodge pictures in the mind, but the scenes are pictures of still-life, and fall into the static rather than the dynamic soil of the soul. If they rise in reproduction, apart from the pure act of memory, they do so in a gentle and brooding way. This sort of teaching appeals almost entirely to the portative memory. It localizes, impresses and reproduces scenes mechanically. This gift of local memory is very common in children, and frequently enables them to shine at examinations, and to excite the envy of fellow pupils less gifted with powers of retention.

#### IV. THE RECITATION METHOD

We come now to a type of teaching that implies preparatory work on the part of the pupil. The duty of the teacher, under the Recitation Method, is to assign the lesson to his scholars, to awaken their interest and sustain their sense of duty in studying it, to give them guidance and suggestive hints which will enable them to use their study time aright, and then, during the lesson period, to test by questioning, and apply what the scholars have learned, and put this memory part of the lesson into right relations with the rest of their knowledge, with Scripture, and with life itself.

Teaching by recitation has certain advantages.

1. First, it gets the scholar to work on his own initiative; he prepares the lesson. The scholar thus comes to the recitation with some familiarity if not mastery of the subject. His thoughts are tending in that direction. He has some appreciation of what he understands, and there may be some questions formed in his mind as to what he does not understand.

2. If the memory work is well chosen the lesson's subject matter will be definitely marked off and limited in the mind of the teacher and scholar. The close is already glimmering at the beginning. There is less likely to be rambling into outside fields during the teaching period.

3. The scholar is more apt to take away from the period a few definite and well-fixed facts and truths. It is not merely a general impression of things which has been left on his mind, but some actual knowledge will probably have been imparted.

4. The teacher through his questioning, and through the more intelligent questions which the scholar desires to ask, will gain a better insight into the scholar's mind. A mere story-teller or a mere expositor, or a mere lecturer may teach his class till doomsday and never get a sight into the inner workings of the minds of those who are sitting at his feet. A teacher who remains in ignorance of the inner life of those whom he teaches is at a great disadvantage.



5. In recitation the teacher gains some opportunity to train his pupils to use language correctly and fluently and naturally, and to eliminate all sorts of errors that have up to this moment been a part of the thinking of the scholar. He gets to know the defective moral and mental integrity of his pupils. He learns their weaker character—whether they will accept or reject prompting from their classmates, whether they will try to conceal their ignorance, whether they are totally lacking in interest, whether they are willing to lie and cheat and deceive in order to uphold their reputation before the one who teaches. Many of the double standards in life originate in the child very early through his assuming a false attitude toward parents at home, and toward the teacher in the class—for the sake of maintaining a good opinion before them.

In the recitation the teacher also becomes acquainted with the pupil who is intellectually lazy. Expressing thought is hard work. The teacher will be surprised to find how his boys are accustomed “to clothe their ideas in rags and tatters of language—half-completed sentences, ambiguous phrases, and even slang—with much poor pronunciation, and far poorer enunciation.” (Roark).

It will be the duty of the teacher to stir the scholar to express his thought in clear, concise and complete sentences, and to prevent all slouchy

thinking. To insist merely that the pupil shall recite in the exact language of the text-book is a poor way of conducting a recitation. It dulls the originality of the pupil and fails to call forth any activity except that of memory. It is owing to a repressive text-book routine in recitation that many a twelve-year-old child shows less individuality than the as yet irrepressible seven-year-old scholar whose desire to question has not been tamed down by routine methods into correct conventionality.

No recitation will be successful if it is conducted merely as a piece of routine, or as an act without connection. It is in the teacher's place to fit today's recitation on to what has preceded, and to what is to follow. His memory lesson should begin with a brief review of what already has been gone over in former lessons, and after the application, should close with an interesting outlook on the lesson that is to come next.

*Is Memory Work Essential in Sunday-School Teaching?*

The teacher whose main effort is to drill and test the memory, and to store it with facts, is very much despised in these days. Educators look down on him as a relic of a by-gone and barbarous age. But, in the belief of the writer, the time will come when they will

revise their judgment. They may be brought face to face with their pedagogical oversight in a very stinging way, through the manifested defects of their own instruction which they have conceived it to be their glory to impart.

It is true that a reliance upon memorizing, apart from the use of the understanding, was one of the signal mistakes in religious and secular teaching in bygone days; and this mistake still perpetuates itself in certain kinds of stereotyped question-and-answer instruction. But it likewise is true that the drillmaster who insists on accurate memory is indispensable today and ever will be. Without drill there may be alertness, life and ingenuity, but there will be neither certitude nor mastery. The recall of past ideas is difficult, and for those who are not gifted with a verbal memory, only comes after more or less painful effort. It is this effort that teachers and scholars (who love the easy way) seek to shun. But the ability of any scholar to use his knowledge depends on his capacity for recalling it. Forgetfulness is a loss of power to recall an idea already given. It is a part of the teacher's work, by skilful questions, to get the scholar to recall that which is gradually passing beyond the pale of memory. Ideas that appear to be irrecoverable can be brought back to the mind of the scholar if the teacher will use proper stimulus.

There are two extremes in this matter. It is a gross mistake to depend on memorizing as the chief feature of teaching. Yet as an auxiliary and used regularly in moderation, it fixes and stores the truth in the scholar's mind, "line upon line, and precept upon precept."

It is essential that even a teller of stories fix certain elements in the mind of the pupil. If this be neglected, the work will be defective in accuracy and permanency. Certain elements must be made sure by the scholar's re-telling, by testing, drill and review. When the teacher leads the scholar afield and induces him to make his own discoveries, it is important that mile-stones and marking posts be firmly set up. When the teacher takes the child into the sphere of worship, it is similarly indispensable that certain elements of prayer, of melody, of conformity to usage, be fixed in the memory. And when, finally, the teacher plunges into his favorite analytic regions of study, it is simply indispensable, as a preliminary, that he shall have fixed certain connective elements in the pupil's minds.

The mechanical work of a teacher may be drudgery, but it pays. The well-known story is told of an old teacher of Latin who agreed to take a small class in Livy, provided that the students would write in their blank book, and review frequently every day, all the words whose

meaning they were required to hunt in the Lexicon. At the end of ten weeks half the class read two pages without looking up more than *two words*. They had been drudges; but henceforth they were masters forever. And the joys of mastery far exceeded the woes of drudgery.

It is the tendency nowadays in Sunday-School teaching to send forth children on the path of knowledge as stumblers forever, simply to escape the little drudgery that memoriter reproduction at the start renders imperative; but that so soon brings with it the joy of mastery. Do not give up the work of the drillmaster in teaching.

In summing up this extended discussion of the Recitation type of teaching, let me emphasize that its usefulness depends upon the proper assignment of material in advance, in which the teacher is to give the pupil not too much nor too little to do, to point out connections with what has already been done, and to graduate the task of preparation so that it be neither too easy nor too difficult. The usefulness and success of the method will vary with the co-operation of the pupil in regular study; and with the intelligence, freshness, judiciousness and vitality of the teacher's questioning during the lesson period.

In enlisting the interest of the scholars in study, the teacher should warn them not to aim at getting through by the easiest way. He should show them how to work. He should give them

a motive in their work, and provide the charm of interest, and when the scholar comes back to the next lesson prepared, the teacher should be sure to call for everything he has assigned, and should do so invariably, so that the scholar will not feel that his work has but indifferent value in the teacher's eye, and that his effort has therefore been in vain.

#### TYPES OF TEACHING

The Teacher Should Use His Individuality.

1. The Dramatic Mind.
2. The Interrogative Mind.
3. The Descriptive Mind.
4. The Recitation Method.

## CHAPTER IX

### OTHER TYPES OF TEACHING

#### V. TEACHING BY DISCUSSION

IN the Method of Discussion, the teacher proposes a topic, or a problem, inherent in the lesson, and of present interest; and after outlining the subject thus brought into the field, and emphasizing its limits, proceeds to ask for problems, thoughts or elucidations that suggest themselves to the scholars. The teacher's task under this method is that of continuous development or gradual construction. It consists in throwing a broad, strong simple light far in advance, and in commenting on what each of the scholars may have to offer, in such way as to keep the subject in its proper track, and constantly advancing toward the goal. Anything in the way of prolonged debate should be averted or skilfully checked; and the teacher, who must not allow himself to become confused, nor to have his eye withdrawn from the goal, and from the successive portions of time that can be allotted to each subject, must be ready to so combine the material that has been offered as to draw profitable and edifying conclusions.

The topic may be proposed by one of the scholars; it may be announced a week in advance,

parts of it may be assigned to each of the scholars for thought and investigation, and even for written preparation. If the scholars are free in expression, intense interest and at times undue excitement may be awakened through the use of this method. Very often those who are most free in expression are also light weight in the quality of their thought, or too insistent in pressing their own side, and the teacher must have sufficient foresight and wisdom to avoid catastrophies. Above all, he must keep the discussion advancing along lines of real importance. He must fill out awkward silences and vacant spaces. He must prevent opinionated scholars from monopolizing more than their share of the discussion, and he must see that the Word of God itself is everywhere made prominent as the fountain of truth, and the standard by which all ideas brought forward are to be tested and judged.

#### VI. THE LECTURE METHOD

The Lecture Method is, like the Method of Discussion, more usually in vogue in dealing with mature minds. It is the presentation of the material of the lesson, not in an oratorical or pulpit manner, but nevertheless in uninterrupted and properly connected discourse, and leading up to a practical conclusion.

The teacher who uses this method will un-



consciously modify it and carry it through in line with his own native bent or gift. Some teachers possess the ability to impart to those who hear them a familiarity with the bones in the framework of the subject. Their gift is that of direction, proportion, emphasis, perspective, and they seek unification in diversity. Whether the subject be the Books of the Bible, the History of the Children of Israel, the Narrative of the Life of Christ, the sequence of the Church Year, or the truths taught in any of the five parts of the Catechism, such a teacher will convey to his pupils an insight into origins and ends, into connections and through lines, into binding cords and cables, and more minute threads, that develops inner consistency, and, so to say, muscular strength, in the apperception of the scholar.

When the teacher combines this gift with that of graciously clothing the framework with flesh, and if, perchance by questioning, at the close, he stimulates his scholars to recognize and reproduce an extended train of fact in narrative form, with insight into cause and effect, he will have reached the ideal of his profession, and reaps its joys to the full.

Again, a teacher with a scientific rather than a logical bent of mind will raise the subject as a problem to be investigated. He will cultivate in his scholars an accurate desire for facts, a habit of weighing both sides of a question, a

realizing power and sense of localization, an ability to look for and trace historical problems, a habit of taking into account the environment and auxiliaries, and a method of observation, noting conditions of time, place and atmosphere.

Some teachers are most successful in dealing with human character and *personality*. They are familiar with various phases of human nature. Their natural bent of mind is biographical. They find themselves at home in the analysis of human character. They love to seek out the motives in a course of conduct. They look for the effect of feelings and emotions. They point out the consequences of action. They compare and contrast two parallel characters. They may be very capable in presenting ideal characters as a standard for the scholars and in pointing warnings from characters that have fallen into wickedness.

Our Saviour frequently used this method of teaching *by example*. He contrasted the peoples of Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin with those of old-time Nineveh. In various parables and similes he contrasted the sheep with the goats, the Pharisee with the Publican, the unforgiving servant with his forgiving Lord. He set up the man of one talent over against the man with ten; the protecting Shepherd over against the pillaging robber; the tree bearing figs over against the one bearing thorns. He

contrasted light with darkness, natural order with the order of life, the ground receptive to seed with the kinds that repelled or choked it, and the manna of the wilderness with the bread of heaven.

Still another type of teacher is the man who loves to emphasize general and universal principles. This man is very cogent as a close reasoner, though he is not suited for immature minds. He must be located in the right place in the Sunday-School. The Lord needs the intensive power of Niagara, and the broad volume of the majestic Hudson, but he does not use either of them to grow pond lilies in, or to water a rosebush. A teacher who would be entirely too abstract for children is by no means a failure in Sunday-School, if he is put in the right place. He may be the very one to stimulate our mind in a search for principles, in grouping single truths into one truth, in emphasizing fundamental causes, in making extensive surveys, and in bringing to light germ thoughts which, though hidden, are at the root of all else. The expository grasp of these large minds is needed to deal with great divine truths, with such fundamental principles as justification by faith, regeneration and conversion, predestination and free will, the church and the ministry, and the Word and the Sacrament.

The Apostle Paul is a typical illustration of the

teacher whose reasoning is adapted to the mature mind. He leads us into the deepest mysteries of the Scriptures and the most perplexing problems of heaven and earth. Yet in his practical exhortations he is brief, courteous, bold and frank, businesslike and to the point. He gets at wickedness and sin without rhetorical flourish, and his use of the Word to the mature sinner is direct and radical.

Up to this point we have been looking at the various types of mind that are inclined to the lecture style in teaching, and have tried to point out the more striking ways in which they adapt it to the workings of their own thoughts. But when we come to analyze the lecture-type of teaching as such and in itself, we find that there are at least three different general methods under one or the other of which the lecturing teacher will express his thoughts. These three methods we may term the expository method, the thematic method, and the topical method.

In the *expository method*, the teacher seeks to get at the meaning of the text, clause by clause, and at times word for word, just as it was written, and deduces practical lessons by the way as he goes on in this explanation of Scripture. The order of his thought is the order of Scripture itself, and the bulk of his contribution is explanatory information by the way. He is a living and practical commentator on the text, eluci-

dating and setting forth, step by step, for our benefit. His success is determined largely by his skill in the selection and treatment of the points for application. His difficulty will be to prevent the class from losing the main thread of thought, and the sense of making progress, because of his attention to the many details which he must traverse before reaching the goal. In order to keep the interest of the class at a sustained pitch, and prevent them from becoming wearied, he must possess a considerable degree of direct and connective thought power of his own.

The adherent of *the thematic method* ventures his all on the successful selection of a central subject, under which the various parts of the lesson are arranged and explained as subsidiary and as contributory to the main theme. This central thought or theme is chosen, often after much study and thought, on the basis of the teacher's insight into the section of Scripture to be taught, of his estimate of its centrality and importance, and of the spiritual and intellectual needs of his scholars.

The *topical method* does not start with any single theme as a great and organic center. Nor does it concern itself with connective detail. Nor does it exposit either the text or the thought of the Scripture itself in its natural order *as written*. But it draws out of the lesson-passage under

consideration, a certain number of leading ideas or principles or points, because they are fruitful and timely; and develops and applies each of them. They may be unrelated to each other, or they may have a loose but natural connection with a central topic, or with the starting point or thought. This method may be said to exposit timely ideas found or deduced from any parts of the passage, rather than actually constituting an explanation of the text or of its central thought.

The expository method is conducive to a clear explanation and sound interpretation of the meaning of Scripture, so that the hearer takes away with him a clear and comforting understanding of its meaning. The thematic method conveys a sense of mastery of the inner unities of the passage, very satisfying to our intellectual sense. The topical method applies or is supposed to apply the teaching of Scripture to the leading and fresher points of contact it may have with present-day thought. The good expository teacher is faithful to God's Word. The good thematic teacher unfolds its riches of truth in unity. The good topical teacher applies the truth of Scripture to present-day issues.

Each of the three methods has its advantages and its dangers. The danger of exposition is a loss of interest because the detail overshadows the unity. The danger of unfolding a central theme is the forcing of Scripture into a logical

but unnatural channel. The danger of topical teaching is the cultivation of a deeper interest in the topic than in the Word of God, which is supposed to be its warrant and to constitute its basis. In the service of a bright thinker, but one who hastily and imperfectly prepares his lesson, and who uses Scripture merely to hang, as on a row of pegs, such thoughts as occur to him, the topical method is conducive to superficiality.

Every teacher should conscientiously select the type and method that, on the whole, and under all the circumstances in which he finds himself and his class, will bring the results that he believes the Lord intended him to effect.

#### VII AND VIII. THE CO-OPERATIVE AND RESEARCH METHODS

The Co-operative Method combines the Question, Recitation, Discussion and preparation of the scholars under the guidance of the teacher, in such way that each member of the class contributes his share toward the result. The lesson is started by the teacher, in the manner of discussion, during which each pupil is called on, in one way or another, according to his own peculiar talent, to produce the results of his preparation in the work.

In the Research Method the teacher becomes leader of a group, and assigns to each scholar a

given part of the lesson to investigate for himself. During the lesson period each member of the class presents his part, which is commented on, given a valuation, and organized by the teacher into the combined result of the work of that day.

The Illustrative type of teaching and the Practical or Parenetic type will be treated in a later chapter.

#### OTHER TYPES OF TEACHING

1. The Discussion Method.
2. The Lecture Method.
  1. The Expository Method.
  2. The Thematic Method.
  3. The Topical Method.
3. The Biographical Method.
4. Teaching by Example.
5. The Reasoning Method.
6. The Co-operative Method.
7. The Research Method.



## CHAPTER X

### THE SAVIOUR'S TEACHING

IN sitting as pupils at the feet of Jesus, perhaps the first thing that impresses us is *His absolute confidence* in what He taught. He was sure of what He said. He never wavered. He knew it would come to pass. He was not disturbed by the presence of those who were opposed to His teachings, nor by the questioning of high dignitaries. He spoke from knowledge and from conviction. Whether those who listened accepted or rejected His words made little difference to Him so far as the certainty of His utterance was concerned. All the power of the living God was on His side. If men would not hear Him, it was the worse for them, not for Him.

Several great consequences follow from this absolute confidence in the truth which the Great Teacher possessed, viz.:

1. *The Effect on the Teacher.*—He was *never flustered*, never defeated in argument by those who disliked Him. So final did His utterances become, when pressed, that we read, "No man was able to answer Him a word, nor durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."

If the teacher's certitude and conviction as to

truth are absolute, he need not fear criticism. A teacher who is uncertain or hesitating in his personal convictions actually invites criticism. He gets nervous under the presentation of different views instead of welcoming them. He lacks the great and sympathetic patience of one who knows, in dealing with those who do not yet know. Our Lord has promised this great quality of certainty to those who proclaim His truth. He promises to give it to us through the power of the Holy Ghost. "The Comforter, Who shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you; He shall tell you what to say."

2. *The Effect on the Scholars.*—A second result of this certitude of Jesus as to what He taught was in *the impression* it made. No one could help feel how different His teaching was from that of the ordinary Scripture expositors of the day, who gave various views, who commented on minor things of the law, often adding very strict prescriptions and rules. The clear, simple, large words of Jesus made their own impression and produced their own effect. After listening to Him the people said, "He speaketh as one that hath authority, and not as the scribes." If you will teach a truth that has taken possession of you heart and soul, of whose power you are convinced, and which you are burning and longing to impart, its force will reach far beyond what you

had a right to expect. You will become the mouthpiece of a higher cause and power. The authority that is back of you will go out with and clothe your utterances. Your scholars will be impressed with the weight of the truth you utter. It will not be your emphasis of it as authoritative, but the authority that it reveals within itself that will serve to convince them.

Hence this great practical lesson. If we become sure and full of the power of the Word we utter, it will be received with the respect that is its due.

3. *The Purpose of Teaching.*—A third quality in the teaching of Jesus, following in the line of what we have said, is this: that He had a *Message* to proclaim. He was speaking for the life or the death of those whom He addressed. It was His day of opportunity and their day of grace. He had come all the way from Heaven to speak this Word. He had passed through humiliation and suffering in order to proclaim it. He was about to seal it with the sacrifice of His own blood, and to prove it by His victory over the grave. He spoke as the especially sent representative of the living God. "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you." If you, as a teacher, will accept and magnify your office, and will get the Message that you are to give to your scholars, it will not be necessary to amuse, to entertain, or to divert them. The great reality will be before them.

4. *Mystery Presented in Simplicity.*—Jesus might well have felt Himself baffled by the great truths He was called on to proclaim. He had to deal with the deep mysteries of God and with the profoundest wants of the soul. In doing so He succeeded because He spoke simply. He took His terms *from the experience* of His hearers, and used arguments that appealed to their common sense. He illustrated by drawing pictures out of their own life. For this purpose He used such common objects as light, salt, and water, the birds in the branches, the hen mothering her brood, the tasks of the housewife, the farmer, the shepherd, the steward, the children playing in the open market-place, the feasts of rich men, the occupation of the merchant, and the decisions of the courts.

All life is built on eternal truth. Such truth as reaches us in our own experience, we are familiar with, and in so far as we understand it, it has a vital grip on us. If then we will put our message in such terms as appeal to the life, experience, and associations of our scholars, they will be gripped by the appropriateness of the truth as it applies to their own situation.

5. *The Direct Personal Touch.*—However our Saviour was not satisfied with merely speaking in simple language and in understandable illustration. He went further. He found a proper *live point of contact* between Himself and His hearers.

He sought that one thing in which they would be deeply interested and were thinking about. He found out their problem and made it His problem. From this point, at which he found them in eager response, He drew them on to the real message. The Samaritan woman was interested in Jacob's well and its water. Jesus started there, and before long interested her in her own salvation. Nicodemus was interested in the Lord's power of doing miracles. Jesus interested him in the miracle of the new birth and of His own death that makes our new birth possible. The multitude was taken with the multiplication of the barley loaves. Jesus showed them that He Himself was the living bread from heaven, greater than the manna with which Moses fed them. When you teach, look for the connection between that which interests the scholar and what constitutes your message, and proceed from the one to the other.

6. *Using Common Knowledge.*—We all have some knowledge of religious truth, which can be used to *bring new truths home* to us. Jesus' hearers were well versed in the Old Testament. He therefore often started from some striking Old Testament fact. He referred to "your father Abraham." He warned by recalling Lot's wife. He alluded to the fate of Nineveh. He speaks of David and Solomon and quotes the prophets. His Sermon on the Mount shows how superior the law of His Kingdom is to the law of Moses.

We have both the Old and the New Testament to draw from. Passages in the New Testament excel, for purposes of quotation, in showing us Christ and the substance of spiritual truth. Passages in the Old Testament, which extends over far larger reaches of time, and covers the careers of many more personalities, are more striking in their depiction of human deeds and qualities. Both are open to the well-informed Sunday-School teacher.

7. *Making the Pupil's Thought Active.*—Jesus made His hearers participate actively with Him in reaching solutions. He asked *questions*. His questions struck deep and hard. They never were neglected, even where they could not be answered, by those who heard. Starting from the pupil's answer, he built up most effective knowledge. It was in this way that he told the story of the Good Samaritan in response to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Thus also He brought the disciples to clarity as to Himself by asking, "Whom do men say that I am?" This was a simple question of hearsay. But when He quickly followed it up with "Whom do *ye* say that I am?" it compelled the disciples to draw the great conclusion from the many things *they* had seen and heard from Him. Jesus always was glad to ask and answer questions. He used this method when He was a twelve-year-old boy in His early days, and continued it even under the insincere and hostile

attacks of His enemies just before His death. When they set a trap for Him, His questions or His answers caught them.

Think of the questions you can ask your scholar to awaken and draw him out. Think also of the answers he may give, and of the use you can make of his answers, to draw him to the Message you intend to leave in his heart.

8. *The Object of Jesus' Teaching.*—His object was ever *practical*. He sought *to create faith* in Himself and *to inspire and command service* for others. He called Peter, James, and John from their boats, and patiently toiled with them for years to make them fishers of men. He told Matthew to follow Him. He converted Zaccheus. He asked for laborers for the harvest. He prepared them to face great dangers—sent them out as sheep among wolves. He warned them against a theoretical religion that brought forth no fruits. He dealt severely with the rich young man, and made a great promise to the dying thief repentant. He expected action as a result of His teaching. Whosoever will be His disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Him.

While we cannot always produce these direct results in the hearts of our scholars by our efforts as teachers, yet our great and ultimate aim can and always should be practical. In many cases we are but sowers, sowing the seed, or waterers of that which has been sown by others, and must

leave the harvest to be gathered by others. Yet our work will be well done if we have the same living and practical interest in our object that Jesus had in His teaching. Then we shall be doing the one thing needful.

#### THE SAVIOUR'S TEACHING

1. His Absolute Confidence in What He Taught.
2. He Had a Message to Proclaim.
3. He Presented Mystery in Simplicity.
4. He Found the Live Point of Contact.
5. He Used Common Knowledge.
6. He Made His Listeners Think.
7. He Created Faith in Himself and Inspired Service for Others.



## CHAPTER XI

### HOW SHALL I INTEREST THE PUPIL?

UP to this point we have looked at the art of teaching in the light of Scripture and from the point of view of the teacher's purpose, gifts and methods. But the other party in the teaching art, the scholar, can no longer be ignored. The problem of interesting his class is fundamental to the teacher's selection of any method.

The appearance in America of Dr. Maria Montessori, the Italian woman educator, hailed by many as the greatest revolutionary in the art of teaching children since the days of Froebel, impels us to draw from her ideas a few lessons on the art of interesting your pupil.

#### THE ART OF INTERESTING YOUR PUPIL

The scholar must *do his own thinking*. You can no more think for your scholar than you can walk, or eat, or sleep for him. You can incite him to walk, tell him how to hold his balance, perhaps support him when he is in danger of losing it, but the act must be performed by the person himself, and too abundant aid given by the teacher, or too close a supervision on his part, ultimately detracts from the power of the pupil to do for himself. "Learning," says Payne, is "self-teaching.

The only indispensable part of the process—the mental act by which knowledge is acquired—is the pupil's and not the teacher's; and the teacher cannot, if he would, perform it for the pupil."

The first work of every teacher is to *create a desire to know*. When the youth cast off from the city was employed by the owner of a great tract of swamp land to travel up and down its boundaries every day and guard it from intrusion, every sight and sound was an enigma to him. As he passed back and forth in the lonely depths two caressing eagles dropped a quill upon him from out of the clear sky. A golden bullfinch insisted upon perching itself before him on the wire fence. A great green bullfrog sat on a stone on the other side of the swamp and began to speak to him. An exceedingly brilliant luna-moth emerged from a cocoon and began unfolding its wonderful and delicately framed wings of white and lavender before his eye. Sight after sight and sound after sound appealed to his mind with its fullness of mystery. There awakened in him the desire to know what these things meant. He determined to spend the first money he had earned in the purchase of books written by naturalists that would unfold to him the secrets of the woods. That boy now had within him, implanted there by nature herself, the first essential of knowledge, namely, *a burning desire to know*.

Can you create in your Sunday-School pupils

*a burning desire to know?* If not, your teaching will be a dull and dead form, and its results will be superficial. But if you can awaken this burning desire within the pupil, your teaching will become a living thing, it will rise to the height of reality as if by magic. Yet what is there in the subject matter of the average Sunday-School to create in the boy's mind a burning desire for knowledge? He has little natural interest in the lesson. Its substance does not appeal to any of the active instincts of his nature. Its freshness is already worn off by the fact that he has traversed the same general pathway in years gone by. Indeed, in many cases you can scarcely convince him that he does not already know all that you have to teach. The scholar in Sunday-School with a burning desire to know is an exception.

Let me suggest a few things which may enable you to awaken this desire. First of all, *try to kindle it in your own soul*. Search for such points and pathways in the lesson as lead straight into the realities of life. Break through mere forms of language as you would through the ice coating the surface of a lake, and get down into the deep water. Life, natural and spiritual, everywhere leads straight down into mystery and this mystery in its depths is inexhaustible. If you get away from the surface of things, and down into the heart of the fact or truth that touches your own soul, you will soon find life enough and

freshness enough in the lesson before you. You will begin revolving problems in your mind. You will begin seeking a solution of things. You will begin finding in yourself the first living sparks of a burning desire for knowledge.

How can you communicate this desire to your boys? Well, to begin, let me say that *it is highly infectious*. If you are really full of it yourself, it will radiate out from you in all directions, and those within the range of your influence will catch the thing from you as readily as they catch the measles from others. There will be something in your eye, something in your tone, something in the reality of your enthusiasm that will affect your class. But, secondly, a mere general infection, however epidemic it become in the class, may leave no results, for the reason that it will manifest itself without law or order, and will only call forth a confusion of ideas. To remedy this you must use an orderly *discrimination, selection of view points, and intellectual guidance* in order to bring the general feeling to definite fruitage in the short time allotted to you for dealing with the minds of your scholars.

Therefore, in order to have the salient and really effective points of appeal come up in the mind of the class, and to have them arise in a proper succession, it will be necessary for you to *think out the subject in advance*, and, as far as possible, from the point of view of the boy who

is filled with a vague but a burning thirst for knowledge, or of the one who needs to have that feeling still more powerfully incited. And here begins the use of the most powerful tool or lever that you have in your possession. *Ask questions.* Questions that spring right out of the boy's own heart. Questions that lead right into the heart of the subject. Questions that the boy is unable to answer, but in whose answer he will be intensely interested. Questions that not only create in him a desire to know, but that he must carry around with him in his mind for a week or more, and which drive him to be active in seeking a solution.

If you can by this method create a background of interest in the whole course in which you are studying, you will have an eager and expectant group to greet you with the beginning of every lesson. The most difficult of all the teacher's problems, namely, the problem of *awakening interest* in the mind of the scholar, will have been solved.

But there is a second thing for the teacher to do. It is not sufficient merely to create an eager thirst to know, but it is also necessary *to create* in the pupil *an eager desire to do*. And one of the best ways to create this desire to do is to get the scholar into a situation in which he cannot help himself, and from which he cannot extricate himself, unless he actually exerts his powers and rises

into action. This is the essence of value in the Montessori method. Not to do, is to die. Not to go to the table, is to starve. Not to find one's shoes, is to get frosted feet. Nature is relentless in her teaching. Good wishes and pious phrases amount to very little. Nature will take no account of extenuating circumstances. She throws her pupil on his own resources. He quickly discovers that what he must learn from her he must learn without explanations, and yet she puts the spurs into the child on every side. As a rule he is far more eager to act than to learn; and if he does hold in himself the secret of knowledge, he can scarcely wait for the moment when he shall be permitted to engage in the (to him) almost holy experiment of transforming his knowledge into action. And if the act be a success, and the conclusion warrant the promises, the joy of his triumph creates an epoch in his life.

One of the difficulties in Sunday-School teaching is the *small opportunity* that exists *to make the transfer from knowledge into action*. Too often we are obliged to stop in our teaching at theory. We can neither induce nor begin, and still less complete the practice. This savors of unreality. Theory and advice are not what the boy wants. A result such as this is really a short circuit in the boy's mind, interfering and estopping, perhaps causing the engine to run wild, but in any case interfering and failing to connect with, the actual

powers and responsibilities of life. No boy wants mere advice. No boy wants pure theory. What he wants is the real thing. What he is interested in is genuine activity.

While the teacher cannot follow out and superintend this activity in the scholar's own life, she can do two things that are quite effective. First of all, by the use of *illustrative parallels* that reach home to the life of the boy, she can *point out the complete working* of the activity to the mind of her scholars, and not only stimulate and interest, but produce an effect on character which will be likely to operate similarly when the parallel condition becomes active in their own lives. And it is worth the while of the teacher to take much time and thought in the search for such an illustrative parallel as will enable her to set the principle which she is teaching in her lesson on the actual wheels of practice, and set it agoing before the mind of her scholar. But, in the second place, and this is the most important of all, she can create in the mind of her scholar *a burning desire to act*. You have gone a great ways toward activities with a boy in your home when you present him with a new pair of skates. If those skates are just the thing to stir his fancy and to fit his foot, you have completed your part. You need not go out on the pond with him, nor even tell him to go. You can let the matter rest just there. So the teacher can feel assured that if she succeeds in

creating in the mind and heart of the scholar a burning desire to act on the principle which she is teaching, she has effected her object.

Teaching in Sunday-School often makes no pretense toward the awakening of this desire to act. It believes itself to have fulfilled its function if it has succeeded in imparting knowledge, but knowledge that lies dormant and unassimilated, as a foreign thing, in the mental chambers of the scholar, and has not been transmuted into the actual life currents of his soul, as these currents manifest themselves in his contacts with the world around him, is a formal and not a vital thing. Much of the formal and superficial and barren character of our teaching and our preaching is due to the fact that it lies in the mind as an untransmuted theory, and has not actually formed a contact with the reality in us to which it was intended to correspond. It is in this way that faith becomes *intellectual belief* instead of *active trust*. It is in this way that doctrine becomes an *intellectual definition* instead of a *confessional fact*. It is in this way that the Catechism becomes a mere theory of truth divorced from the practical activities of life. It is in this way that reading the Bible, or the lesson, becomes a mechanical exercise in which the numberless valves of power beneath the surface, ready to be turned on, are never used nor even discovered by the teacher.

Please remember that the two great objects



toward which your weekly effort in the class and your preparation are to direct themselves are these:

1. To create a *burning desire to know* in the minds of your scholars.

2. To create a *burning desire to do* in the hearts of your scholars.

### HOW SHALL I INTEREST THE PUPIL?

CREATE A BURNING DESIRE TO KNOW.—(1) What action is absolutely necessary in every scholar? (2) Illustrate this fact. (3) Quote Payne's definition of learning a lesson. (4) What is the first business of the teacher? (5) Illustrate this fact from the realm of nature. (6) What is the result of a teaching in which the pupil is not interested? (7) What will happen if the pupil be interested? (8) Give some reasons why the average Sunday-School pupil lacks an interest in the lesson.

THE WAY TO DO IT.—(1) What is the first step the teacher must take in trying to awaken in the pupil a burning desire to know? (2) How shall he do this, and in what will it result? (3) How will the teacher's desire communicate itself to the scholars? (4) In what way must the teacher guide the general stimulus thus gained? (5) What is the first prerequisite to such guidance? (6) What is the valuable method which the teacher has at his disposal? (7) What kind of questions shall the teacher ask? (8) What will be the result of the use of this method?

CREATE A BURNING DESIRE TO DO.—(1) What is one of the best ways with which to create in the scholar a burning desire to do? (2) Illustrate this fact from nature. (3) In what does the scholar's natural eager-

ness consist? (4) What to him is the supreme triumph of knowledge? (5) Why is Sunday-School teaching weak at this point? (6) State the weakness more fully. (7) What is the first of two effective things that the teacher can do to overcome this weakness? (8) What is the second and most important thing she can do? (9) Illustrate this fact.

THE WEAKNESS OF MUCH SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING.—(1) To what does much Sunday-School teaching make no pretense? (2) Enlarge on this fact. (3) What does faith become under such teaching? (4) What does doctrine become? (5) What does the Catechism become? (6) What is the result on the reading of the Bible? (7) What are the two great objects toward which the weekly effort of the teacher should direct itself?

## CHAPTER XII

### WHAT METHOD OF TEACHING SHALL I ADOPT?

ALL methods have their weaknesses, and many of these have been mentioned in a previous chapter. But something more ought to be said on the two great generic methods between which to select in teaching the adult and even the intermediate class.

The first general method is to take the text of Scripture as your road-bed and teach it verse by verse, explaining the meaning of every clause, opening up the thought in that clause, connecting it with what precedes and with what follows, discussing the persons, doctrines, facts, truths, customs, each by itself, as they come up in the order of the text, and either drawing the applications directly out of the text as you go on unfolding it, or gathering the most important of them together at the end of the lesson and driving them home to the heart of the scholar.

This is the *exegetico-expository* method. It sets forth the thought of the writer of the Scripture as he intended it, and makes the impression upon the mind of the scholar which the writer himself desired to convey to the reader. It is sometimes called the *historical* method, because it bases the exposition upon the historical details that are

found in the text and unfolds the meanings as they arise in the actual flow of the history that has been written. But the term historical is unfortunate, for the reason that quite a large number of modern writers, who insist on the historical method, are not true believers in God's supernatural inspiration of God's Word, and reduce the substance of Scripture to mere history and ignore its most important content, namely, God's revelation of salvation.

This might also be called the *interpretative* method, because it seeks to arrive at the exact meaning which the writer of the book in Scripture intended to convey in his writing, and then to interpret that meaning in such terms as will make it most clear and forcible to the pupil. The teacher who uses this method faithfully is a true expositor, that is, he sets forth, in the very order of Scripture, and by explaining the language and terms of Scripture, the facts and the truths which the inspired writer intended to make known. This is an exact, a faithful, a reverential, and an effective method of teaching the Scripture.

But it has its limitations. In the first place, a great deal of time is required to go over the ground by this method. Expository teaching is a matter, first, of explaining the details; second, of grouping them together in the order of the text, and third, of applying their spiritual values to the heart of the reader. Often one cannot explain the

historical background, the terms and expressions, and the content even of a single phrase or short passage of Scripture without consuming a number of minutes. Very little ground can be covered in the space of time that is usually allotted to teaching the class. And a great deal of preparatory study is necessary to render the teacher perfectly sure as to the exact meaning at all points, and to enable him fluently and without waste of time to reproduce these meanings and connect them naturally with the text.

A second limitation is this: You are starting from the viewpoint of the writer, and not from the viewpoint of the scholar. In most cases you cannot presume much of an interest on the part of the scholar in the thought of the writer. For, first, the writer is ancient; second, his thought is often spiritual, and not vivid or dramatic; and third, it is sometimes complicated and abstract. Your rate of progress in teaching is slow, and the stock of patience in your listener gets lower and lower, unless you have the rare gift of filling a text set before you with life and interest.

A third difficulty lies in making the practical applications strong and effective, and yet not so extended as to destroy the proportion and interest of the original narrative. In this kind of teaching an application is really a practical comment, a seed shot, or sidelight thrown out, by the way, which must be strong enough to pierce the soul,

and yet not so strong as to distract the attention of the mind from the flow of the text which is before it. In explaining directly from the text much will depend upon the teacher's naturalness of arrangement. He must not seem to touch everything and explain nothing. He must take up the thread of events in its natural order. Many a teacher's exposition is merely talk at random. "He dances from the great to the small, from the near to the remote, from the material to the spiritual, from the figurative to the literal, and back again."

It must be said, in favor of this method of teaching, that it is the real way. It is the one way to make scholars acquainted with the Scripture. It sets up the Scripture itself as the only rule of faith and life. When a section or chapter of the Scripture has been studied under this expository plan, the scholar becomes possessed of the real and full meaning of the Scripture and understands the Word of God as the writer understood it when he wrote it.

#### THE SECOND METHOD

The second general method of teaching the Scripture is not *exegetical*, but *logical*. It seeks to find the great underlying truth in the particular section to be studied, and then, on the basis of various parts of the text, to organize all the relations into a unity. In other words, it takes some leading truth or idea in the lesson, or several such

leading truths, and seeks by a more free use of the text to show the real relationship of all the truths to each other and to apply them in their bearing on the present moment. This is the method which a preacher usually adopts when he unfolds his text. He chooses a theme, divides it into parts which are related to each other and to the theme, and then proceeds to unfold and apply the parts, with a final and powerful application, if possible, of the whole. He often can choose as his leading thought such a truth as is of great interest or great importance to the scholar, and perhaps put it in such modern language as that the scholar will recognize it as a living question of the day. He is not obliged to lose much time in unfolding connections, in showing the relationships of clauses, in explaining the meaning of obscure words or phrases, but he seizes upon the great salient points, enlarges upon these points and makes them real and vital, and presses them home to mind and heart.

This second method also has its limitations. It is more likely to wander at random over Scripture, and to substitute the thoughts and ideas of the teacher. It is liable to become too much of a sermon, not filled with real insight into the meaning of the divine truth, but overloaded with exhortation, and with superficial applications to the supposed need of the scholar. A teacher who is a ready thinker is apt to depend too much on his

extemporaneous ability to develop truth from the heart of the lesson, and to fail to give sufficient time to the exact study of the text.

Where the teacher himself does all the talking, as is the case in some Bible Classes, and in other classes where scholars are very ignorant or unresponsive, the logical lecture method, in view of the shortness of the time at our command, seems to be almost necessary. But where there is a group of bright minds who can be interested in the study of Scripture as such, the expository or interpretative method is far to be preferred. While it lacks in the dramatic directness, and while it fails in that cumulative emphasis of final application, which comes when all streams are made logically tributary to one great conclusion, it leaves a knowledge of God's Word, which is exact as to facts and truths, which is a real thing, and not merely an emotional impression, and which gives the scholar an opportunity to participate in the development of the lesson, and which causes him to conclude the hour with a definite sense of gain, a sense of mastery of a certain part of the text of Scripture. True teaching presupposes such intimate acquaintance of scholar and teacher as stimulates a free interchange of thought, of question and answer. The teacher must address the mind of each individual in his class often enough to work off the rough bark of science and the outside rind of conventionality, in which real



ideas may be inwraopt and held back, where freedom is lacking, and must attain that stage of confidential intercourse with his class in which each gives forth without reserve his innermost and best ideas and feelings.

#### WHAT METHOD SHALL I ADOPT?

THE FIRST METHOD.—(1) Summarize the first method of the two ways of teaching. (2) What is the name of this method? (3) How does this method bring out the thought of the writer? (4) What is this method sometimes called, and why is the term unfortunate? (5) Why may this method be called the interpretative method? (6) What is the teacher who faithfully uses this method of teaching? (7) State and explain the first limitation of this method indicated. (8) What is the limitation because of the viewpoint? (9) What further difficulty is experienced in the effort to make the practical applications strong and effective? (10) In explaining directly from the text upon what will much depend? (11) What may be said in favor of this method of teaching?

THE SECOND METHOD.—(1) What is the second method of teaching? (2) What does this second method seek to do? (3) Illustrate this method by the work of the preacher. (4) What privileges and opportunities has he who chooses this method? (5) State the limitations of this way of teaching. (6) Under what circumstances is this method almost necessary? (7) In what kind of a class is the expository method to be preferred? (8) Show what may be attained by this method? (9) What does true teaching presuppose?

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOW SHALL I ILLUSTRATE THE LESSON?

IT would be easy to describe the process of teaching as "A Tour Personally Conducted." The chapter "How Shall I Apply the Lesson?" would have been more striking if we had headed it "Driving the Nail Home." The present chapter might have been tagged as "Red Lights and Roman Candles." These themes are *figurative*, and they suggest the dangers connected with the use of striking figures in teaching.

When your mind is naturally imaginative, as teaching truths flash into consciousness, or begin to grow there, they usually are accompanied by pictures of the point at issue. Perhaps you see the picture before you see the truth of which the picture is the fleshly investiture. So many of these brilliant likenesses may rise in your mind where-with to illustrate the truth that they may clog the force of your thought or bury its flow in a wealth of illuminative material. This is only one of many dangers in the use of lights and colored fires.

The teacher who illustrates \* is throwing lustre or brightness upon thought. Or, better still, he is

\* The major part of this chapter appeared originally in *The Sunday School Times*.

drawing the veil aside and encouraging the native light in any subject to burn brightly. To light up thought for other people is a more ambitious effort than merely to state it. Failure here, consequently, is more inglorious than it is when we are altogether plain and modest in our method of conveying truth. However, we ought not abandon a more potent method simply because it is more dangerous. What we ought do is to keep our eyes open to the dangers that lie in the wake of an unskilful and careless use of illustration and avoid them. The perils are many. The use of mental pictures in teaching will be a failure under the following circumstances: (1) If they are incongruous in their parts. (2) If they are not in point. (3) If they, though in point, yet rather obscure than illumine. (4) If they neutralize each other by sharp contrast. (5) If they are in poor taste. (6) If they allure the mind into the sphere and associations from which they are drawn, or attract so much attention to themselves and take such hold on the imagination that the point to be illumined is lost sight of. (7) If they illustrate too much. (8) And, finally, if one stock illustration is pressed into service too repeatedly or made to do duty on all occasions.

1. *Incongruous Illustrations*.—Horace, opening his *Ars Poetica*, inquires whether you could suppress your laughter if you found a would-be

artist painting a figure with the head of a man, the neck of a horse, the body of a bird, and the tail of a fish! Many a lesson is embellished with rhetorical monstrosity such as this. Perhaps your mind is naturally obtuse in discriminating between similars, or the attempt, in the swiftness of the moment, to discriminate, may confuse you, and before you know it you have mingled figures that are very diverse and ridiculous when placed too close to each other. If your fancy is fertile, you are tempted to change the figure as often as a new picture pops itself up in your field of vision. Or it may be that you glide spontaneously over from what you have been trying to paint, into a new image that begins to loom in your mind, and thus pass unconsciously from the neck of a horse to the wing of a swan and thence to the tail of a fish. You may wish, at all hazards, to be striking and brilliant. You put in a heavy dash of color on the spur of the moment and you reap your reward. The listeners, ever on the alert, are enjoying your grotesque caricature of the sublime, even as they enjoy the cartoons of the comic illustrated paper. Their hearts are hardened against the truth you bear, and their amusement is at your expense.

2. *Illustrations Not in Point.*—There are illustrations that do not illustrate. The analogies between the general truth to be illumined and the special image employed to illumine it are striking

and beautiful, perhaps, but not in point. It is declared to be the characteristic vice of the talented young teacher to say fine things because they are fine.

3. *Illustrations that Obscure and Weaken.*—They are in point; they are fine, but they do not increase the power and grandeur of the thought, and must detract from its simplicity. Every image which adds nothing but ornament or finish is an encumbrance. "He that gathereth not with me, scattereth." The bold stroke should not be stayed to make it graceful. The vigorous outline may not be richly overlaid with effeminacy. "We are more gratified by the simplest words which can suggest the idea in its own beauty, than by the robe or gem which conceal while they decorate; we are better pleased to feel by their absence how little they could bestow, than by their presence how much they can destroy."

4. *Illustrations May Neutralize Each Other's Force.*—Ruskin says, "Contrast increases the splendor of beauty, but it disturbs its influence; it adds to its attractiveness, but diminishes its power. He who endeavors to unite simplicity with magnificence, to guide from solitude to festivity, and to contrast melancholy with mirth, must end by the production of confused inanity. There is a peculiar spirit possessed by every kind of scene; and although a point of contrast may sometimes enhance and exhibit this feeling more

intensely, it must be only a point, not an equalized opposition. Every introduction of new and different feeling weakens the force of what has already been impressed. The single-minded thinker is reaching an end quite as high as the more ambitious student who is always 'within five minutes' walk of everywhere,' making the ends of the earth contribute to his pictorial *guazetto*."

"A green field is a sight which makes us pardon  
The absence of that more sublime construction  
Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,  
Glaciers, volcanoes, oranges, and ices."

The speaker who flashes his truths with clouds of burning Greek fire in successive hues will lead us entranced to the spectacular of dreamland, and then, when the illumination evanesces, will leave us in darkness. So, too, he who brings out his dazzling series of grand electric brilliants, shocking the imagination with successive thrills of pleasure, is likely to be illustrating at the peril, greater or less, of true edification. Our aim is not to paralyze the hearer, but to develop him. Pure sunlight is the true light for our use.

5. *Illustrations That do Not Elevate*.—Illustrations may degrade the truth and debase the hearer by their poor taste, or by suggesting to the imagination connections with a low, carnal, or worldly sphere. Illustrations are likely to be

bridges, leading the thoughts down into the more entertaining and less hallowed regions from whence they are drawn. They may bring the busy and the worldly world into the holy place. They are like the camel in the fable. It is well to recognize the danger of what is called popular speaking. Here it is. While the speaker conveys the earthly illustration very vividly, either his intention or his powers stop there, and the spiritual truth is not only not conveyed as vividly, but is actually excluded from the soul because the earthly has taken such hold on the imagination. Instead of becoming an adjunct to the spiritual, it has mastered the lesson, and entirely choked out the spiritual from the hearer's soul, deluding him, perhaps even as to the true nature of divine truth. Thus it becomes possible for illustrations to subvert the very purpose for which they were called into existence. This feature distinguishes much of Mr. Sunday's melodramatic art.

6. *Illustrations May Illustrate Too Much.*—Your analogy may contain a most striking point in one of its details which can be turned against your own argument with crushing effect. The point has escaped your observation, but the hearers apply it with relish.

7. Finally, illustrations may be rendered *obnoxious by repetition*. The more striking the image, the more rarely it should be repeated. In

the speaker it betrays either poverty or vanity, or a disposition to run in ruts; to the hearer it loses its force, offends his taste, and lowers his estimation of the teacher. In a teacher or preacher nothing scarcely is such a weariness to our flesh as the repetition of the same old stories and phrases and peculiarities. Even in the writings of the great masters, where the thought is inexhaustible, we find ourselves annoyed by their overfondness for this or that favorite expression. The danger of offense is certainly still greater where an average teacher appears before the class, Sunday after Sunday, with thought which has the maturity of a week and the profundity of a few hours' reflection.

#### HOW SHALL I ILLUSTRATE THE LESSON?

1. Indicate wherein there is danger in illustrations.
2. What does the teacher accomplish who illustrates?
3. Why is failure in illustration particularly inglorious?
4. Under what circumstances will illustrative teaching fail?
5. Point out the lesson drawn from Horace's illustration.
6. State the mental conditions which produce various defects in illustration.
7. Show how illustrations may not illustrate.
8. When do illustrations obscure and weaken?
9. Show how illustrations may neutralize each other.
10. At what should we aim in illustration?
11. When do illustrations not elevate?



12. Point out the danger of popular speaking.
13. How may illustrations subvert the purpose for which they were used?
14. When may illustrations illustrate too much?
15. What is the effect of repetition of illustrations?

## CHAPTER XIV

### HOW SHALL I APPLY THE LESSON?

1. *STRIKE a sharp, clean blow.* Do not bray, bruise, or blunt your pupil's sensibilities. Some teachers hammer away at their scholars, and all over them, until the whole soul has been beaten down into armor-proof imperviousness. Strong blows are all right when you strike the nail on its center, and it rides home freely under a few well-directed strokes. But usually the pounding teacher does little but hit his own fingers and batter the wall behind and beside the nail. Mere hammering hardens the soul.

2. *Do not make flourishes* and go through so many stilted forms with your tools that the process becomes more striking than the result. Say what you say naturally, with a warm heart and enthusiasm, and without too much fine-spun explanation. The more complex the application, the less penetrative it will be.

3. *Do not pin a moral* on your scholar's coat-lapel, in the hope that it will of itself soak into his blood and diffuse itself into his system. Most teachers leave the scholar to *infer* the application from a general statement of the principle underlying the situation. This is the worst fault of the average teacher. Instead of clothing the truth

with living power, instead of making its point sharp, instead of directing it straight into the personality whom you are trying to influence, you state a platitude, a true but perfectly dead truth, and think you have said all. A platitude is a perfectly obvious, but dead truth. It is an accepted statement so proper and correct and well-known that nobody disputes it, and everybody accepts it—with a yawn. It is a truth whose only impression is to bore you. This is perhaps the most common fault of the writers of our practical applications in our lesson quarterlies. And the ability to drive a truth home is perhaps the most singular and uncommon excellency of Billy Sunday's preaching. Slang helps. It takes hold of the imagination. It causes the truth to cling to you as though the arrow had a barb in it. But, unfortunately, the outlying bad effects of slang are so great, especially the indirect ones, that godly men will pause in using it as an enforcer. Slang can never be used without tearing a gash or gaping wound into devoutness and reverence. It always is ultimately a detractor from spirituality.

4. Nevertheless, *do not be commonplace in your application.* Be interesting, be lucid, be forcible, be vivid, even be racy. A worn and faded precept, from a jaded teacher's mind, has been compared to the dull chill pattering of a November rain.

5. *Apply the lesson to your class as individuals,*

and not as a unit. Needs are particular. One ought to be stirred to hope, another ought to be held down by the fear of God. One is too frisky and needs to be steadied, another is indifferent and needs to be stirred. One is environed with temptations of luxury, another with those of poverty. One is governed by his tastes, another by his appetites. One takes things too seriously, another not seriously enough. Good medicine given to the wrong man becomes poison. Look for the symptoms in your patient, and administer according to his case.

6. *Do not drive too many nails.* Neglect the petty and the incidental tacks of the lesson, and centre all on that which is strongest. No doubt your lesson book will furnish you a great variety of materials. Nine-tenths of them are intended for your wastebasket. You cannot sew with a dozen needles at the same time. The dozen are there in order that you may select the one best suited to the purpose in hand, and the one that most corresponds with the materials which you are using. If you spread your lessons over all creation, they will become diffuse and evaporate like the morning mist. Your appeal should be alive and beat with the very soul of the lesson.

7. *Do not indulge in the exclamatory* or the exhortatory style. You will become accustomed to it, and the effect on the hearts of your pupils will

amount to nothing. Many a minister's sermon is spoiled because there is no practical appeal whatever in it, but many more sermons are spoiled because of the excess of exhortation and appeal that they contain.

8. *Do not try to bring tears* to the eyes of your scholars, *and then stop*. That is the vice of the theater. It excites to laughter and to weeping, and after the curtain is finally drawn the folks go out and dismiss the subject. When your scholar is moved by the truth you have to present, there should be no rest in your soul until the emotional energy thus aroused within him is put to a proper purpose, and until he sets to doing that which is necessary in his particular case, whether it be a case of repentance, of gratitude, or of desire for the Master's Kingdom. Both the Roman Catholic and the Methodist churches understand human nature. They have long ago provided a ready-made method by which the emotional energy awakened by truth can be set to the reaching of practical results. We cannot set ready-made mechanical methods, but we must seek a personal and spiritual method. The transmutation of religious energy into genuine religious habit is one of the great arts of teaching.

9. *Remember the gnarled fibres*, the solid knots, and the crooked grains into which your nail will strike. Unless you know, they will turn your point and bend the nail. Some of your

scholars are congealed fossils. There are the confessedly worldly, who are devoid of the first rudiments of a living repentance and faith. There are the formalists, who see no good except in the outward deed, and there are unbalanced emotionalists who luxuriate in the riot of passion.

10. *Do not encourage an excess of religious excitement* in your school. A red-hot spike may burn its way into the soul, but it will char and sear the surrounding fiber. Every great gathering of people calls out the primal gregarious instincts of mankind and tends to become a mob. Religious excitement is no exception to the rule. Feeling is contagious in great assemblies. It is a blind instinct and not to be trusted.

11. *A story*, if it be the right one, *will give swiftness and life to your stroke*. But if it be the wrong one, it will dissipate instead of converging the truth, and destroy your whole effort. The main point of the story must be identical with the main point of the lesson, and it must be the one point which you emphasize. Your central point must be self-evident and pre-eminent in the story. This central point must be more interesting than any of the incidentals in the story, and it must fly, as the arrow flies, swift and straight.

12. *The telling use of a brief and pithy Scripture passage*, a passage that will stick fast in the mind, that affords food for thought, and stirs the

soul, that will present itself unbidden again and again in the thought of the scholar, and the force of whose truth the scholar knows, feels ever anew, is one of the most effective of all methods of closing a practical application.

Intelligent practice is all you need. You need not be a graduate in psychology to be able to drive the nail home. We do not think of asking astronomers, biologists, ornithologists, or even solitaire-diamond soloists to fasten pictures on our parlor wall or to pierce, for a hinge-screen, our precious mahogany heirlooms. Let us send around the corner for a skilled mechanic. And if we cannot secure him—why, an apprentice is better—with his hatchet—than an astronomer!

The successful teacher is an artisan. He need not be a learned scientist.

#### HOW SHALL I APPLY THE LESSON?

1. Application Must Be Direct and Skilful.
2. Application Must Not Be Involved or Rhetorical.
3. Application Is Not a Mere Statement of the Truth Underlying the Lesson.
4. Commonplace Should Be Avoided.
5. Applications Should Be Individualized.
6. Variety of Application Is Desirable for Selection, but Not for Use.
7. Exhortation and Exhaustive Exclamation Are to be Avoided.
8. Emotions Should Not be Stirred for Their Own Sake.
9. Pupils That Do Not Respond.

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10. The Dangers of Intensity.
11. The Value of the Story in an Application.
12. The Use of Scripture in the Application.
13. Teaching Is an Art, Not a Science.



## CHAPTER XV

### VALUE OF THE QUESTION METHOD

WE have treated two methods of teaching: First, the *expository* method—that is, explaining the text as you go along; second, the *logical* or *lecture* method—that is, presenting the main truth in its organic relations. But there is a third and more effective method, without the use of which, in conjunction with the other two methods, there is no real teaching. This third method is that of *questioning*. The expository method throws light in detail. The lecture method leaves a unified impression, but the question method compels the scholar to get busy and form his own judgment on the facts and truths. It thus permanently fixes and establishes knowledge. In all other methods the scholar is merely a listener and his mind may remain passive. In the question method the scholar becomes an active participant and divides the work and reaps the result jointly with the teacher.

### AVERSION TO THE QUESTION METHOD

It is surprising that the active and practical American mind, which always wants to do things for itself and in its own way; which claims liberty for itself, and which desires independence

of authority, is so averse to the use of the questioning method in Sunday-School work. Part of this average unwillingness on the part of the scholar to participate with the teacher, for his own benefit, in the work of the lesson is due to the *teacher's lack of skill* in the use of questions. The average teacher does not really know how to use his sharpest, most clean-cut, and most effective tool. The story is told of a teacher asking her class, "What must we do before our sins can be forgiven?" and of the entirely correct but inapposite reply of a little girl, "We must sin first." This is a sample of much of the clumsiness and ineffectiveness of the use of the questioning method in Sunday-School.

Another part of the scholar's unwillingness to engage in questioning is due to his general view of Sunday-School lessons, a view which *does not take* the acquisition of *spiritual knowledge seriously*, and does not set a real value on it. A third reason, perhaps, why the scholar is indisposed to answer is that he has been brought up to regard *passivity as the normal attitude* in religious life. To sit still and listen to sermons, to sit still and listen to the singing of others in worship, to sit still and be mentally indolent under the receiving of spiritual advice has become a regular habit in American religious life.

Still another reason for this aversion is to be found in the *indolence* of the scholar, in his *lack*

*of interest* in the subject, in his *merely tolerating* the teaching of the teacher as something that tradition, and the home, and the Church have imposed on him, and to which he submits as a matter of form, although he does not feel any particular concern in it. But perhaps the *chief* reason why a scholar is averse to being questioned, even when there is no natural timidity on his part in engaging in general conversation on spiritual subjects with his teacher, is his *dense ignorance* of the subject matter under discussion. He shies off from a direct question addressed to him personally because he feels his lack of fitness and unpreparedness to take any intelligent hold on the thought that is before the class, and because he is disinclined if not ashamed to display his ignorance before the teacher and the other pupils.

All these points of view contribute to an established attitude or spirit in the school, and cannot be gotten rid of by any single zealous teacher of a class, because the general tone of the school is such that the scholar regards the intrusion of personal questions by the teacher as something not altogether warranted in the situation and as an act of impertinence. There are scholars who will go so far as to stay away from school if they know that their teacher is going to use the direct question method in the impartation of the lesson. The remedy here lies in changing the general viewpoint of the school. And for this change of

viewpoint the superintendent, the pastor himself, the parents, and the more serious and intelligent-minded older scholars are responsible. There should be a combined effort on the part of all who are interested in the welfare of the school to change this viewpoint, and to have the scholar, from the Primary Department up to the Senior, regard the question period as the most delightful, the most natural, and the most necessary part of the exercises of the school.

It is true that a teacher with great gifts, with a power of awakening and sustaining interest in the subject, and with the trained ability of a natural cross-examiner can do much to overcome the general inertia and the baleful points of view which have settled down into an established tradition of Sunday-School life. But even such a teacher will constantly be laboring under a handicap. The atmosphere is against solitary effort. And it is not fair to the teacher or the work, to expect or to allow one single teacher to battle unaided against these difficulties which constitute an almost controlling feature of the general viewpoint of the school.

#### THE VALUE OF A QUESTION

To ask a question is to set the wheels of the scholar's mind working. To ask a question is to individualize the scholar. To ask a question is to expose the scholar's ignorance to his own con-

sciousness. To ask a question is to penetrate to the scholar's soul. To ask a question is, if the matter be pursued properly to the goal, to banish fog and confusion. To ask a question is to awaken in the mind and spirit of the scholar a personal reaction to the truth. To ask a question is to put responsibility on the scholar and to compel him to use his judgment and decide for himself. To ask a question is to turn mere religious ideas into actual reality in the mind of the one that is being taught. To ask a question is to bring the scholar to bay and to make him struggle and fight for a foothold in his own intellectual and spiritual life, and thus to give him an abiding strength and sense of security. To ask a question in respect to any truth or fact is to make an indelible impression, to give the scholar a living principle of action, and to send him forth as a convinced and living witness to that concerning which he has been taught.

To fail to ask a question is to fail to bring the lesson into the court of reality. It is to fail in establishing truth in the heart of the scholar. It is to fail to make him a live and acting personality in the sphere and under the power of the truth which is to be conveyed. To fail to ask a question is, in fact, to be superficial in one's teaching. A teacher who moves on smoothly and expeditiously through the lesson, without seeking any individual reaction on the part of his

scholars, may be compared to a powerful locomotive drawing a whole train of cars after him. The motive power he applies is sufficient to keep the whole train in action and to bring it to its destination. But when the cars have reached their destination, and each of them is uncoupled from the engine, it remains a lifeless and helpless thing, on the siding on which it has been placed, incapable of making further progress until it again is linked up and drawn forward under the impetus of an extraneous motive power.

But a teacher who asks questions is not a leader who draws a long chain of inert units after him in the sweep of his own strength, but is a dynamo that puts motive power and life and activity into each of the cars that, coupled together, constitute his class, and renders each of them capable of mental and spiritual activity on their own account, in their own environment, and for a triumphant progress out of their own ignorance, inertia, and difficulties.

Usually it is best to weave question-and-answer teaching in as a part of one of the more positive methods. If possible, the teacher should drop formality, and his questions should spring out of the presentation as it stirs the natural impulse of the soul. Questioning may give rise to animated argument and discussion. It was one of the favorite rabbinic devices, and was used by

the Pharisees and Sadducees in their attempt to entrap the Saviour, who also employed it most effectively by way of counterstroke.

It is particularly useful in the cases of minds that do not so much need the impartation, as the examination of truth, the removal of error, and the awakening of a spirit of action.

All questioning implies some previous degree of growth. It is foolish for any teacher to expect to *pluck fruit* from boughs when as yet the tree has not been planted. Questions in the religious instruction of young and growing minds should follow faith, and not precede it. The use of the critical method implies doubt, and unless the mind has some anchorage to stand by, becomes destructive, or confusing, or induces a non-committal tendency. This is a positive injury to the young and immature mind.

Trees and vines require pruning, but we do not begin to prune when as yet they are but seeds. Nor do we go forth into the vineyard every day of the year with pruning hooks. Once or twice a season will suffice. It is strange that many up-to-date teachers under the influence of the critical method do not see that growing is as essential as pruning; that pruning must follow in the wake of growing; that no shoot should be cut back so far as to lame its life; and that the most essential elements of immature development are plenty of food in the earth beneath, and air and

sunshine in the atmosphere above. To introduce a knife prematurely into the process of absorption and assimilation is death.

But when truth has acquired sufficient maturity, no process is so beneficial to its firmer establishment as relentless and continued questioning. An extraordinary degree of skill is required for this, with a foresight of a long series of possibilities, and often a start far away from the destination to be aimed at. Truth established through this severe process of cross-examination will abide.

To cross-question a scholar until he sees the true light dawn, has its dangers. Unless both teacher and scholar possess a large stock of patience and good will, temperamental injury and irritation may be induced before the result is reached. Nevertheless the testing of knowledge implanted, and after it has become sufficiently ripened and sturdy, through the instrumentality of the question, whether by public or private review, whether for a firmer hold of mechanical elements, for a probing in the case of weaknesses in the spiritual life, or for a reassurance of the soul's faith, is very valuable.

#### THE EFFECT OF A QUESTION

To *ask* a question is, first, to throw a scholar back on his own inner experience. The experience you are trying to tap may be that of appro-



priated truth, or that of actual life. Second, if your question is as to knowledge new and recently gained, it is to compel the scholar to transfuse his recent gains into the general framework of his own individuality and consciousness, and thus reproduce his own view and judgment, however crudely, in response to skilful tests made by the teacher. You thus put the scholar's own experience and knowledge *into action*. It *responds* to your call. Third, you compel him to *focus* what he may have gained in instruction, and *formulate* it for practical use. Hence, in the fourth place, to ask a question is to teach and enable him to apply his theory to any situation with which he may be confronted. It results in *not merely storing knowledge*, but organizing it and *rendering it vital* in such a way that he can draw upon it, from the viewpoint of his own inner life and judgment, whenever he comes to need it. The mere possession of knowledge by the mind is a useless and misleading thing. We need the ability to turn and apply one's spiritual possessions. It is this that makes a man a man; that clothes his convictions with value for himself and others, and that creates an active personal force in the interests of the kingdom of God.

#### VALUE OF THE QUESTION METHOD

1. Need of Probing for the Truth.
2. Aversion to the Question Method.

3. A Question Sets the Scholar's Mind Working, Exposes His Ignorance, Turns Ideas Into Reality, Makes an Indelible Impression.

4. Question Should Be Combined With One of the More Positive Methods.

5. The Uses and Dangers of Cross-Questioning.

6. THE EFFECT OF A QUESTION.—(1) What is the first effect of a question? (2) If the question pertains to recent knowledge, what does it compel? (3) In his responding, what is the scholar compelled to do? (4) What does questioning force the pupil to do with the knowledge stored? (5) What, beyond mere possession, clothes knowledge with value?

## CHAPTER XVI

### HOW SHALL I USE QUESTIONS?

THE great problem is, How to so question the scholar that the results aimed at in the last chapter may be attained. Every main question, to be successful, must have a threefold quality: *first*, it must awaken and sustain interest in the subject; *second*, it must be so clear, definite, and important that the active mind of the scholar, however primitive that mind be, will recognize its importance and significance; *third*, it must be so spiritually searching that the scholar will be unable to evade the responsibility of forming and uttering a true and personal judgment on the matter in question.

In order to cover this important field more completely, we shall lay out the purpose of the interrogatory method as sevenfold, and, for convenience, shall sum the matter up in

#### SEVEN LAWS OF QUESTIONING

These seven purposes, with their corresponding laws, are as follows:

1. To Awaken Thought.
2. To Speed Up and Gain Momentum.
3. To Shed Light.

4. To Introduce Life.
5. To Secure Accuracy.
6. To Sustain Interest.
7. To Make Things Personal.

### *I. Awakening Thought*

(“Point of Contact”)

#### THE FIRST LAW OF QUESTIONING

To awaken thought, the question must either *appeal to ideas which the scholar may already possess*, whether right or wrong, concerning the truth to be taught; or it must be so framed as to *cause him to feel the need of more knowledge* on the subject, and thus arouse his desire, and give him a strong motive to search matters and to put forth such answer, or such a query, or such a confession, as will lead to the opening up of the knowledge which he esteems important.

The first point for the teacher to consider, in the awakening of interest by a question, is what is technically termed “the point of contact.” In other words, your question must touch the scholar’s mind at that particular spot at which it is fitted most naturally to respond to the subject in hand. Hence, to be successful in asking questions, you cannot follow the order of your own mind. Often you cannot follow a logical order. Often you must be prepared to question into ignorance, or into perverted knowledge, rather

than to proceed on the basis that the scholar possesses even a rudimentary sound knowledge. In other words, your questions must follow the natural lead of the scholar's mind. A question is like a fisherman's bait on a hook. If it does not appeal to the particular fish he is seeking to catch, the fish will not be attracted. He will not even nibble at the bait. Your question will fall dead on the scholar's heart. The successful bait may not be such as you think you ought to provide. The real problem is not "What question ought logically be asked?" but "What question will catch the interest of the scholar's mind, will reach actively into his viewpoint, will elicit a spontaneous response?"

#### AN ILLUSTRATION

Some years ago the International Lesson Series taught a lesson on "The Prayer of the Penitent" as found in the *Fifty-First Psalm*, and a series of questions and answers on this somewhat difficult subject for children was published, and has been repeated by Prof. Adams in his little work on Teaching, which throws a good deal of light on our first problem in the asking of questions, viz.: getting the point of contact; and we give it here, as follows, because of its suggestiveness:

After the Psalm (51:1-13) has been read:

"Was this Psalm we have just read written by a man or by God?"

"By a man."

"What sort of a man do you think he was?"

Three or four think he was a "good" man; one thinks he was a "dirty" man.

"We'll take the 'dirty' man first. What makes you think he was dirty?"

"It says he was going to wash him clean."

"Who was going to wash him clean?"

(Some hesitation—then "God" and "Jesus" are ventured.)

"Quite right. God was going to wash him clean. But what part of him was dirty?" (No answer.)

"Had he a dirty face, do you think?"

"No, sir."

"Dirty hands, then?"

"No, sir."

"Look in your Bibles, at verse 10, and see if you can find out what God was going to clean."

"His heart."

"Yes. Notice verse 6: Where does God want to find truth?"

"In the inward parts."

"So the man that wrote this Psalm was not a dirty man on the outside, like a sweep or a coal man, was he?"

"No, sir."

"But only a man whose heart needed cleaning?"

"Yes, sir."

"But some of you said he was a good man, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, does a good man's heart need cleaning?"

"No, sir."

"He says, 'I acknowledge my transgressions.' What are transgressions?"

"Sins."

"So the man has sinned, hasn't he?"

"Yes, sir."

"Had he just one sin, or had he a lot of sins?"  
(Some hesitation.)

"Does it say 'transgression' or 'transgressions'?"

"Transgressions."

"And transgressions just mean sins, don't they?"

"Yes, sir."

"'And blot out all mine iniquities.' What are iniquities?"

"Sins."

"Then 'all mine iniquities' means that he had done quite a lot of sins?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then is a man who has done a lot of sins, and has a heart that needs cleaning, a good man?"

"No, sir."

"What sort of a man is he then?"

"A bad man."

"Oh, a bad man, is he? Now, turn to the beginning of the Psalm, and see the man's name that wrote it. You will see it in the small print at the top. What is it?"

"David."

"Is David speaking to himself in this Psalm, or to some other body?"

"To some other body."

"Who is he speaking to? You will see it in the first verse."

"To God."

"When you speak to God, what are you said to do?"

(Hesitation.)

"Well, when do you speak to God?"

("At night" and "when you're praying.")

"David is asking something of God, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when you ask something from God what are you doing?"

"Praying."

"And what sort of people pray—good people or bad people?"

"Good people."

"Oh, then David is a good man, is he?"

(Puzzled hesitation of the children.)

"David is bad because he has done many sins, and has an unclean heart, and yet he is good because he is praying to God. Can a man be both good and bad?"



(An uncompromising "No.")

"Well, let's see. When a blacksmith comes home from his work is he clean or dirty?"

"Dirty."

"But after he has washed himself and sits down to eat his supper and read his newspaper, is he still dirty?"

"No, sir."

"Is he clean now?"

"Yes, sir."

"And is he the same man as he was when he came in?"

"Yes, sir."

"So the same man can be both clean and dirty?"

"Yes, sir."

"At the same time?"

"No, sir."

"But he can be dirty at one time and clean at another?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, what makes the dirty man into the clean man?"

"Washing."

"And what did David want God to do with his heart?"

("Wash it." "Make it clean.")

"Are we told in this Psalm that God washed it?"

(Opposing answers—"Yes," and "No.")

"Well, can God do anything He wishes to do?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you think He wishes men to have unclean hearts?"

"No, sir."

"Then, will he wish to clean David's heart?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he can do anything he wishes?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, as soon as David wants God to wash his heart, God will do it at once, won't he?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long do you think it will take God to wash David's heart?"

("At once," "Quickly," and "Immediately.")

"How long will the blacksmith take to wash himself?"

("Five minutes." "Ten minutes," ventured.)

"Will God need as long as that?"

"No, sir."

"God does not need any time at all, does he?"

"No, sir."

"Then just as soon as David prayed, he was cleansed, and so was at once a good man?"

"Yes, sir."

"Though he had done lots of sins, and used to have an unclean heart?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then are there any bad men?"

(An astonished "Yes, sir.")

"How do you know they are bad?"

"Because they do bad things."

"But I thought David did bad things?"

"But God washed David."

"And can he not wash these bad men, too?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why are they still bad?"

"Because they do not pray."

"God does not wash everybody, then?"

"No, sir."

"Only those that ask Him to wash them?"

"Yes, sir."

"What makes them ask Him to wash them?"

(No answer.)

"Well, what makes the smith wash himself?"

("Because he feels dirty." "Because it would dirty his meat.")

"If the blacksmith liked to be dirty, would he go and wash himself?"

"No, sir."

"Would the water come and wash him?"

"No, sir."

"Then he washes himself because he likes to be clean?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he washes himself because he does not like to be dirty?"

"Yes, sir."

"And if he wants to be washed, he can be washed at once?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then if a man's heart is unclean, it is because he likes it to be unclean?"

"Yes, sir."

"And if he wanted a clean heart he could get it at once?"

"Yes, sir."

"So a bad man is one whose heart is unclean, and who likes it to be unclean?"

"Yes, sir."

"And if he gets tired of his unclean heart, he can get it cleaned at once?"

"Yes, sir."

"So, if his heart still stays unclean, whose fault is it?"

"His own."

"And if *penitent* means that you are sorry for your sins, and will try not to sin any more, would you call a bad man penitent?"

"No, sir."

"And if a bad man became penitent he would at once stop being a bad man?"

"Yes, sir."

"And become a good man?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was David ever a bad man?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is he penitent in this Psalm?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then he becomes a good man?"

"Yes, sir."

"And 'penitent' means that he was sorry for his sin, and had made up his mind never to sin any more?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what we have to do, if we have done lots of sins like David, and have unclean hearts, is to be penitent like David?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, like David, what shall we become?"

"Clean and good."

#### AN ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN POINTS IN THIS ILLUSTRATION

Please notice that this questioning is very elaborate, and consumes much time, so that many details of the Psalm will remain untouched. It fixes only a single point, but it fixes that one point vitally. And that one point is the central spiritual truth of the lesson. Notice that the teacher is master of that one central point, and aims for it at the very start of the lesson, and will not stop or be diverted until he has established it.

Notice also that the teacher starts, not with a story, nor with the statement of a spiritual truth, but *by an immediate reversion to the physical knowledge* of the child (as he is unable to presume in the child a spiritual knowledge), and thus establishes the *natural and vital point of contact* between the scholars' mind and the heart of the

lesson. Notice how he plunges on to the goal, always resourceful, because he knows both the lesson and the pupils, and thus is able to overcome the dangerous turns of difficulty and confusion in which his method may unexpectedly land him. The teacher has a firm grip on his subject, knows what to do, thinks two or three steps ahead of the pupil, is prepared for the appearance of the unexpected in the pupil's replies, uses them bravely, steers through the currents of ignorance and confusion, and finally lands the scholar in a clear and culminating conviction.

#### DANGERS IN ASKING A QUESTION

The dangers in this work are, *first*, an embarrassment in the teacher's mind, which may arise from unexpected and infelicitous answer by some pupil; *second*, the temptation which some smart and cunning pupil may fall into, of propounding a reply which will throw the whole procedure into a ludicrous light; and, *third*, the intricacy of detail which may come out in a lively class, now deeply interested, and which may cause the teacher to lose hold on or miss the thread or clue which he must firmly pursue to bring the class successfully to the goal. But a teacher who has the main matter firmly in mind, and who will not be deterred, will easily learn how to become and to remain master of the situation. His resourcefulness will increase with prac-

tice. He will become skilful, just as does the fisherman, who knows the habits of the fish he is handling, and the very difficulties of the enterprise will only add to the joys of victory. How spiritual and effective is this questioning in comparison with the usual desultory and mechanical method, which takes no account of the first great law of questioning, viz., *starting from the point of contact*.

### AWAKENING THE SCHOLAR

HOW TO QUESTION.—(1) What is the great question as to questioning? (2) State the three-fold quality of a successful question.

HOW TO AWAKEN THOUGHT.—(1) What elements are essential in a question that it may awaken thought? (2) What is the "point of contact" in questioning? (3) To awaken interest, what leads must you follow and what must you not follow? (4) State and elaborate the illustration cited from Prof. Adams. (5) Analyze the main points of this illustration.

DANGERS IN ASKING A QUESTION.—(1) What may occasion embarrassment in the teacher's mind? (2) What temptation is there for smart and cunning pupils? (3) What danger is found in the intricacy of detail which an interested class may attempt to bring out? (4) What will be the aim of the teacher who has the main matter firmly in mind?

### 2. *Momentum*

#### THE SECOND LAW OF QUESTIONING

The first law of questioning presumes a previ-

ous and thorough *mastery of the main truth* of the lesson by the questioner. It also presumes that he has *found the point of contact* between the lesson and the pupil, and will begin the questioning process right there.

#### THE LAW OF MOMENTUM

The second law of questioning is *the law of momentum*. There must be a sufficiently rapid rate of progress. There must be vivacity. The teacher must have a love for his work, and must throw his soul into it, otherwise it will be drudgery and will be poorly done. Let us banish the dreadful drudgery of mechanical questioning. Let us put aside the treadmill system of questions, prepared by somebody else, and that does not fit our thought and our class. Such printed questions are suggestive in the study of the lesson, but not regulative for its teaching except where question and answer are to be committed to memory.

With a thorough knowledge of the lesson material, an establishment of the point of contact, and a heart for the work of teaching, even though the usual utterances of the teacher be somewhat clumsy and halting, he will soon overcome the failing, and will astonish himself by the rapid leaps and glides of thought which he finds himself taking. The subject will take on life and movement.



## QUESTIONING A BIBLE CLASS

Under the first law we selected our illustration of the questioning process from a teacher of *small boys*. In this treatment of the second law of teaching, we shall take our illustration from Mr. F. W. Hall, a lawyer of Madison, Wisconsin, who years ago conducted a *Bible Class* of about one hundred people, largely students of the University. Mr. Hall says, "Vivacity is absolutely essential if one is to hold the attention and interest of the pupils. Everything must move on with a certain rapidity. If questions are to be asked, they should be asked quickly, and should be answered as quickly; and if they cannot be answered by one, they should be passed rapidly to another."

It may be wise to caution the teacher not to be a mere rapid-fire gun, throwing out a hundred ideas a minute, and giving the pupil no time to focus his thought on the answer. Mr. Hall means that the flow of questioning should be fresh, easy, progressive, and lively, but not so brilliant and rapid in sequence as to distract and dazzle the mind that listens and is obliged to accommodate itself to the process. The pupil will not think along a line of thought which you have mapped out and are familiar with as rapidly as you are thinking. You must give him time to consider, and allow him to travel at his own natural pace.

Mr. Hall's idea is that a self-connecting and

rapid, not to say thrilling, flow of questions will preserve the interest of teacher and scholar and will rivet the attention of all. Mr. Hall admits that such a method requires skill and intelligent practice. As a lawyer he knows that cross-examination is the most difficult part of his professional art. He says, "It is easy to ask questions which anybody can answer. It is easy to ask questions which nobody can answer. It is easy to ask questions which have no relation to each other. It is, unfortunately, easy to ask questions which ought never to be asked and never to be answered."

On the other hand, he also admits that it is not easy to give such *definite directions* for the asking of questions as will assure success. However, he illustrates his own method for us. He says, "I first try to fix in mind what appears to be the central truth contained in the lesson itself. I seek for the most important statement of underlying principle, or some fact which holds an important and spiritual truth, and then try to shape my questions in such a way that this truth will be developed until it stands clearly before the minds of the students." It will be noticed that this is exactly what was done by the teacher who asked the questions on the 51st Psalm, in previous discussion.

The truth which is in the mind of the teacher, and which he is seeking to make real and to bring

into shape in the mind of the scholar, according to Mr. Hall, may be an obvious one. If it is such, and is important, his advice is to so develop it by questions that its importance will dawn on the pupil in an emotional way, so that it becomes vitalized in his soul. The questions are to be put in such living sequence that, step by step, they awaken increasing interest and thoughtfulness.

Mr. Hall illustrates his method by applying it to the passage in I Samuel which describes Saul's rejection as king. He first finds the most important spiritual lesson in the passage, which is that *God rejects* the disobedient. He also assumes that there is to be found in the lesson the problem of *reconciling God's mercy* with the terrible command to *utterly destroy* a nation from the face of the earth. He further assumes that the Bible Class teacher has in mind a definite idea of God as a person, like the Lord Jesus, Who must reveal Himself through the universal forces commonly called the laws of nature; and that while Samuel the prophet *reveals God* as acting directly, yet the onlooker sees only the ordinary operation of natural forces. The teacher, having these thoughts in mind, but not stated, proceeds to question as follows:

What was God's command to Saul?

Was this a cruel command?

Do you believe that God ever gave such a command?

Do you believe that our Lord Jesus would ever have ordered the extermination of a nation?

Mr. Hall draws attention to the fact that the foregoing questions may be answered in any way, and the answers will not affect the final result. The questions will be a test of each individual's attitude only, and will not determine the actual underlying principles. Their purpose is to arouse attention and stimulate thought for the presentation of the real issues, which he develops as follows:

Did Saul believe in any God?

Did he believe that God had actually given such a command?

Is he at least so represented by the author of the Scripture?

*Did Saul, in sparing Agag and the spoil, believe that he was disobeying his God and a divine command?*

Was this supposed divine command Saul's highest understanding of right and wrong?

What is *the effect upon character for a man to disobey* the command of the power which he actually believes in as divine?

Is Saul represented as acting conscientiously?

Is deterioration of character resulting from the violation of conscience a natural law? What is the effect of deterioration of character upon a ruler's power to retain his sovereignty?

Is the author of the sacred record presenting

the case of God's dealing with Saul, or of God's dealing with Amalek?

Is God's rejection of Saul, as here represented, in conformity with universal principles?

Is it in conformity with principles enunciated by our Saviour?

Is it not true, then, that Saul's rejection is in conformity with what we might expect from a personality like the Lord Jesus Christ, manifesting Himself through universal laws in history called the laws of nature?

Will the rule as to the deterioration of personal character apply to the *deterioration of national character*?

What is the effect *upon national power* of moral deterioration of character?

May not Amalek's national weakness in the presence of even Saul's army have been dependent upon moral deterioration?

Has national decadence and loss of political power been attended, in the history of the race, with growth or decline of moral powers?

Has not God's law, as revealed in nature and in actual historical experience, been the sudden or gradual rejection of moral degenerates from possession of power to rule?

"Now," says Mr. Hall, "we have reached the opportunity for pertinent and forcible application. Every one has a kingdom. Every one receives it subject to the universal law of obedience,

Every moral violation of the law of conscience, as well as every violation of physical law in the material world, takes something away from our power to rule. To obey is the universal language of God, of nature, of the Scripture, and of experience; and rejection and death the penalty of disobedience.

“Samuel’s splendid sentence, ‘To obey is better than sacrifice,’ becomes a glittering beacon of safety; and his sentence, ‘Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king,’ becomes the enunciation of a universal principle as certain and powerful as the law of gravitation. The Old Testament becomes thus a constant statement and re-statement of resulting loss as the effect of disobedience to our own personal conscience—a record in which God always stands with conscience. Character in its rise and fall is distinguished by its holding fast the principle of obedience to our inward sense of highest right.”

#### SOME COMMENTS

Mr. Hall knows that every lesson will take on a shape of its own, and may tend to run away from the questioner, but he must never allow himself to be led from his own conception of it. He must, as it were, compel the answers to go back to the right channel, changing the form of his question, one after the other, until the right

answer comes as a logical necessity. "Some can see it at once, others may not see; but as their attention is gradually drawn to it more and more, the real purpose of the lesson, as the teacher has conceived it, will stand out with energy, vigor, and, above all, with an emotional power which is the main object and purpose of the lesson work."

Mr. Hall very emphatically states that the teacher must have an unconscious and solid foundation for his work in his own faith. He "must necessarily have a clear conception of his own theoretical, dogmatic beliefs, and must not hesitate to put them forward, from time to time, in a way which will be of value. If the teacher has no faith, he should be frank enough to say so; but such a teacher is generally of little value. If he has faith, as to the Word and power of the living God, as to the certitude of eternal life, as to the divinity of Christ's revelation, of inspiration, of the miracle, he should not hesitate to teach it."

The illustration we have selected from Mr. Hall is intended for mature minds, and teachers who are not able to use a questioning method which runs along this lofty level, should not despair. Let them find their own level, their own understanding of the truth, and let them prepare their question thoughts along their own lines. The great point is that they know clearly in advance what they are after as an end. The great

point is that at every stage they know what they are doing as a means to that end. With experience, the teacher will become cool, unperturbed, far sighted, and yet keenly alive to every incidental contact near at hand.

We have pointed out various lessons from Mr. Hall's illustration. But the main point is this, that in spite of the burden of history and of abstract natural law, which Mr. Hall was carrying, he was able to gain and maintain momentum on his path by the constant and skilful use of questions.

The teacher who is a live questioner is, so to say, in a step-by-step struggle with all the intellects around him. It has all the fascination of a game. He wins out and compels conviction in the others by his superior grasp of the final truth, and by his constant sagacity in leading, guiding, and driving the minds of the pupils his own way. The effect of lessons taught thus is very stimulating, at times thrilling, to those participating. And the impressions made are likely to endure and to become active parts of the spiritual framework of the scholar.

#### MOMENTUM IN QUESTIONING

1. What is essential in order to hold attention and interest?
2. How should questions be asked?
3. What caution is necessary?



4. What will a rapid, thrilling flow of questions secure?
5. What form of questions are the most difficult?
6. What questions are easy to ask?
7. Illustrate Mr. Hall's method of questioning.
8. How should the teacher develop the truth in his mind which he is endeavoring to make real?
9. Apply Mr. Hall's method to the description of Saul's rejection as king. Summarize the thoughts in the teacher's mind, showing how he would proceed to question.
10. Bring out and emphasize the opportunity for pertinent and forcible application.
11. What sentences of Samuel bring out the climaxes?
12. What is to be said concerning the shape of every lesson and the teacher's conception of it?
13. Whither must he compel the answers to go back?
14. What is the main object and person of the lesson work?
15. What foundation for his work must the teacher have?
16. What great points should the teacher know and emphasize?
17. What is the position of the live questioner?
18. What is the effect of such teaching?

### 3. *Luminousness*

#### THE THIRD LAW OF QUESTIONING

By presuming to take the initiative before the class and awakening it by a question, you are gathering the reins into your hand and posing as a master of the lesson-situation. You must *be*

such. The lesson-situation embraces several elements. First are the facts. You must be in control of them. Second is your purpose in teaching. It must stand clear before you. There is the bearing of your question on the purpose. You, above all others, must see into this. There is the point of contact between your purpose and the thinking of the pupil. You must have adjusted it in framing the question.

In guiding the question-process you must get the pupils to respond to *your touch*, you must know *your destination*, and *the road* to reach there. What! Are you laying down the reins? You are afraid you cannot do all this? Rest your spirit. Through practice the complexity will blend into a single instinct. The right questions will come, without your knowing it, at every turn of the road.

#### THE LAW OF MOMENTUM

The second law we have seen to be that of *momentum*. A car that stands still or goes too long on low gear becomes tedious. There must be some acceleration, some vivacity, some advance at every stage. Nothing is more intolerable than to bring the class to a dead halt every few minutes, and perhaps with a bump, by some question that causes a cold chill in the class, and stalls progress, because its purport or bearing is not clear.

## THE LAW OF ILLUMINATION

The third law of questioning is the law of *illumination*. Your question should be a blind or a hindrance to speed only when the class is going too rapidly or in the wrong direction. Ordinarily, it should not mystify, but be perspicuous, lucid, understandable in itself. It also should have the power of throwing some brightness forward in the direction of the path to be traversed. Not to reveal the answer, or give any intimation or hint or help to suggest the answer, but to make the scholar confident of your general intention and direction. In other words, a question should not tend to stupify or paralyze his thinking activities, but should encourage and stimulate them, and give him confidence, hope, and eagerness to respond.

The reasons why printed questions, taken from the book, often are a failure and suffocate class interest is, first, because the teacher has not mastered them, does not understand their purpose, their bearing, their relation to the thought of the pupil, and perhaps does not even know the facts which they connote, but must hastily look up the situation while she is asking the question, and try to gather it out of the printed page before her. All this is a lack of mastery. It is needless to say, secondly, that they interfere with momentum; and that, in the third place, if the question is a *dark lantern* in the hand of the teacher,

it will certainly fail to throw light into the mind of the scholar. When, for instance, you ask the questions, "Who was Hezekiah?" or "What is original sin?" and you yourself have little or no idea of the facts involved in the answers, or of the purpose of the questions at that particular point in the lesson, or of any point of contact between the questions and the pupil, or of the general purpose as an aid to which the questions are being asked, you may be sure that, since the matter lacks luminosity in your own mind, it will not generate very much in the pupil's mind.

Under this third law the main thing is that the question be *clear*. Adams, in his *Primer*, elucidates clearness thus: "The essence of clearness is, that whether the child can answer or not, he is at least sure what the question means. There are four words commonly used in questioning that call for special attention, if we wish clearness. They are *What, Which, How, Why*. In a general way teachers know the meaning of these words, but nothing short of the greatest possible care will save us from confusing them in actual speech. Remember that *what* wants to show qualities; it asks 'What sort of?' *Which* wants to know only the particular person or thing referred to; it singles out one from a common group. *How* asks for the *manner* in which a thing is done, while if we want to know the reason, we use *why*. These two little words—*how*

and *why*—are misused by young teachers to an extent that is very surprising.”

Another cause of lack of clearness in questions, betokening careless habits of thinking in the teacher, is the use of general, common, and indefinite words. How can the scholar know which one of a number of answers you are driving at? Weigle gives the following examples of such indefinite questions: “What *happens* when you tell a lie? What do you *do* when you go to bed? What did Abel *have* that Cain did not? What *is* the new name promised to him that overcometh? What do we *become* when we are baptized?” He says: “Do not ask questions that are vague and admit of many answers. Such a question as ‘How did Saul treat David?’ needs qualification. Put thus, it might be answered in many ways: Made him court minstrel, appointed him armor-bearer, gave him his daughter in marriage, grew jealous of him, tried to kill him, drove him into outlawry, swore to a covenant with him at En-gedi.”

If you bear in mind the concrete lesson material out of which the question arises, and try to frame the question so definitely that the child to whom you are speaking will see the real point you are aiming at, without at the same time disclosing any of the substance of the answer, you will be making yourself perfectly clear.

In addition to clearness, in the second place, the

question should have the quality of *simplicity*. You should ask for only one single thing at a time. And that one thing should be the pertinent thing. It should be the most important thing in the line of progress on your pathway. You may have to select from a half-dozen different question possibilities, and to mentally reject a number of very interesting questions. Your mind must reach into the complex of thought or fact, and pick out the one thing needful. You must ignore many details, fascinating as they may be, because they complicate matters and delay progress. A question once asked "becomes the center of thought for the moment. It gets impressed upon the pupil's mind and acquires dignity and importance in his eyes. It is one of the chief functions of the question, therefore, to direct attention to the salient facts of the lesson and to guide the thought of the pupil to its essential truths."\*

Much of the narrative of Scripture is not simple, but very complicated. In *telling a story*, the teacher who is master of the main line or plot of the drama can swiftly weave in an abundance of detail that adds quality and richness to the story and does not interfere with the sense of unity, but any attempt at multiplicity *in questioning* only adds to distraction. Selection and simplicity, not multiplicity, is the law of clear questioning. To throw light, a question must *focus*

\* Weigle.

the whole situation upon a single point. For the sake of the unity and intensity of impression to be made upon the scholar, as well as because of the danger of losing our track in wandering into by-paths, we dare not diverge into the incidental.

#### QUALITIES OF QUESTIONING

A question, to be clear and simple, need not necessarily be *easy*. Adams rightly says, "Who is the author of the book of Hebrews?" is a simple but very difficult question." Can you answer it? Clear questioning involves a clear understanding of the subject. If the teacher has not prepared his lesson, he is very apt to fall into the habit of shifting his questions, that is, asking the question in several different forms, or even changing its substance once or twice before he finally gives the pupil a chance to answer. The pupil, who has been trying to follow the teacher, and has perhaps had *several answers suggested* to him before the teacher has finished thinking aloud, grows disconcerted at the teacher's frequent change of base, is unable to select from the answers which have occurred to him in quick succession while the teacher was speaking; and thus becomes confused, perhaps puts forth the wrong suggestion, or sits still in utter silence. Adams draws attention to the running question, which deliberately combines in itself a number of elements in a situation, a sort of continued chain or

series, and tries to ask the whole situation at once, as a great breach of simplicity. He calls it the composite question and offers the following specimen, "Who said what, and why did he say it when he was nearly drowned in the Sea of Galilee?" A continued chain is admissible when you are trying to get the pupil to recall a whole paragraph of connected statements, and are helping him to link together into one whole a number of successive and correlated items, or when you are, like Mr. Hall, leading the scholar to think through the chain, to the logic of the conclusion, but not otherwise. You want an answer out of the heart of the scholar, and it rings most true if it be the condensed reproduction of a single vital point.

Mastery, momentum, and luminosity—these three are the laws of the questioning process; and under luminosity the chief qualities are, first, clearness; second, simplicity.

### LUMINOUSNESS IN QUESTIONING

LAW OF ILLUMINATION.—(1) When only should a question be a check to progress in the lesson? (2) What ordinarily is the character of a good question? (3) Upon what should it have power to throw some brightness? (4) What should be the effect of the question upon the scholar to whom it is addressed? (5) State the reasons why the printed questions are often a failure. (6) Illustrate by the questions concerning Hezekiah and original sin. (7) Summarize



Adams' arguments concerning clearness in a question. (8) Give and explain Weigle's examples of indefinite questions.

QUALITIES OF QUESTIONING.—(1) What essential points should be kept in mind in order that you may make yourself perfectly clear? (2) Why and how secure simplicity in questioning? (3) What is the chief function of the question? (4) State and explain the law of clear questioning. (5) To throw light, what must a question do? (6) Why should the questioner not diverge into the incidental? (7) What in the teacher's method of questioning is the cause of confusion in the mind of the scholar? (8) State the objection to the so-called running question. (9) When only is the running question admissible?

#### 4. *Vitality*

##### THE FOURTH LAW OF QUESTIONING

The first law of questioning is that of Mastery. It presupposes effective contact with the lesson on the one side and with the pupil on the other. The second law is that of Momentum. It bars out hesitation and tedious interruption. The third law is that of Luminousness. It involves the use of clear thought and clear language. The fourth law of questioning is that of *Vitality*. A Sunday-School is not a cemetery. It is not a dormitory. It is not a repository, or storage-house of antiques. It deals in and handles eternal life. Vitality of mind, heart, and soul must be kindled. Questions are the probe to stir and stimulate the scholar's inner life.

## PURPOSE OF FACT QUESTIONS

In asking questions of fact of the pupil, we may have any one of the following purposes:

1. To recall and fix the form.
2. To recall and fix the substance.
3. To discuss the substance.

When our questions are intended to *recall the form*, the object may be:

1. To keep the flow clear and unbroken.
2. To impress and memorize the text.
3. To insist on complete accuracy of detail.
4. To induce automatic response on the part of the pupil, and thus save him serious effort, accelerate progress—*i. e.*, momentum—and skim over the lesson in a hurry.

## A BAD PURPOSE

Let us take up the fourth point. This is an illegitimate and superficial way of teaching the lesson. Its effect is to pass through the form of the truth, but to deny, or at least ignore, the power thereof. It seems to leave teacher and scholar under the comfortable illusion that they have fulfilled their task. They have touched every part and have come to the end with a rush. They are happy in the satisfaction of having discharged what was required. Now they can rest.

What an illusion! They, indeed, have gone over the lesson, but they have not gone through it. Nor has it gone into and through them. They

have gone over it as a bird flies over a lake. They have not touched any of its awakening, cleansing, and refreshing depths.

They have set in motion the mechanism of the lesson; and the response has been perfect, easy, and automatic. Question and answer have interlocked beautifully, every part of the machinery has responded without flaw or jar, and they have come in flying to the goal.

The process has been smooth, agreeable, rapid, and *lifeless*. The lesson has lacked all vital elements. The class has been operating a piece of prepared mechanism. The process is automatic.

#### THE MAIN PURPOSE

Without vitality there can be no prolonged interest on the part of the scholar, and if the automatic method is repeated every Sunday its process becomes inexpressibly tedious. It seems scarcely worth while that the scholar rouse himself from his sluggishness to mumble the answer which is ready at hand without effort. The main purpose of the questioning, which was to vitalize the lesson by setting the scholar's mind to thinking, is defeated.

If you possess a live point of contact with the scholar, and a live purpose in your mind, your questions will be vital, and not mechanical. You will know what you are going to do. The thread of connection will be the living thread in your

mind, and not the mechanical sequence of the book. The questions will suggest themselves, and will be modified by the particular responses of the pupil.

#### PRINTED LESSON QUESTIONS

We fear that the lesson page of a Quarterly with its set questions, or a teacher's question book just as readily, are the cause of a habit of lifeless interrogation, or at least the occasion through which the teacher drifts into mechanical work.

These printed lesson questions are not intended to be used just as they stand. Usually the questions are formulated with a view to assisting the teachers and scholars to *prepare* the lesson, and hence they look to giving aid toward a mastery of the facts, and of important parts of the text. But the teacher's purpose is different. He aims to clothe the bones with the garment of life. It is quite true that a further intention in printing the questions is to make suggestions to and assist the teacher in questioning the pupil; but as the individuality of the scholar is unknown and cannot be reckoned on in preparing these questions, they are not fitted to be taken as they are, as the full basis of the question work of the teacher. And even if the questions were fully charged with vitality and were perfect in their fit to the pupil in every particular, they would not evoke a proper response for the simple reason that they

are on paper, and are not a real living interchange of mind with mind.

We frequently have heard the questions of the "lesson leaf" cried down as *the cause* of mechanical teaching in classes, but this misapprehension is due to a misunderstanding and misapplication of the purpose of the questions. Never use the printed lesson questions mechanically, or otherwise than suggestively. And remember that their main purpose is to help in the preparation of the lesson rather than in its reproduction.

#### THE LAW OF VITALITY

A live question will *break into* the scholar's ideas. It will throw a burning spark into his cranium. It will not permit the scholar to evade the issue by merely answering yes or no, or by *suggesting* the kind of answer the *teacher expects*, or perhaps by even suggesting part of the language of the answer. Prof. H. H. Horne, in his little book on *The Art of Questioning* \* says: "A question should exercise the pupil's judgment, and not simply test his memory. When only the memory is tested and pupils repeat by rote what they have verbally memorized, teaching becomes mechanical and devitalized. So far as the quickening touch of life and the real train-

\* Published by The Pilgrim Press, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Price, 3 cents.

ing of the child are concerned, the teacher might as well be getting his answers from a phonograph as from a pupil's mind packed with verbally remembered knowledge. What develops the child's outlook and his real appreciation of the subject is to get him to think, to express a judgment about the matter.

"A judgment is the mind's assertion about reality. This it is that knits truth into the intellectual fiber of the pupil's being, that assimilates the knowledge received. As unassimilated food means physical indigestion, so unassimilated knowledge means mental indigestion; and when the habit of not thinking is persisted in, mental dyspepsia results, and solid mental achievement becomes impossible.

"The pupil must take a share in giving himself the lesson. There must be a mental effort in every answer. Such questions instruct; such questions are truly Socratic. It is a mistaken notion to think that Socrates was a simple asker of questions; the *Meno* of Plato shows that Socrates developed the answer from the learner's mind; and this makes Socrates the world's teacher in the art of questioning.

"In applying this characteristic it will, of course, be remembered that with pupils under fourteen it is the memory rather than the judgment to which appeal must dominantly, though not exclusively, be made."

## NO STEREOTYPED ANSWER

Sir Joshua Fitch goes further and insists that, to get a live answer, the scholar may not use the language of Scripture in his reply, but must give the answer *in his own words*. We believe that where the scholar uses *his own idea*, and clothes it in part, by way of proof and illustration, with the words of Scripture, he is realizing the highest type of answer. But, since usually in framing an answer the text of a book is resorted to for the purpose of getting a *ready-made* answer, the caution of Fitch is necessary. He illustrates the point from the lesson of the Good Samaritan as follows:

*A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

Who is this parable about? *A certain man.*

Where did he go from? *Jerusalem.*

Where to? *Jericho.*

What sort of people did he fall among?  
*Thieves.*

What did they do with his raiment? *Stripped him of it.*

What did they do with the man himself?  
*Wounded him.*

In what state did they leave him? *Half dead.*

“Observe here that the teacher has covered the whole area of the narrative and proposed a

question on every fact; so far he has done well.

"But notice that every question was proposed as nearly as possible in the words of the book, and required for its answer one (generally *but* one) of those words. Now it is very easy for a boy or girl, while the echoes of the Bible narrative just read still linger in the ear, to answer every such question by rote merely, with scarcely any effort of memory, and no effort of thought whatever.

"Let us go over the same subject again:

Who used these words?

To whom were they spoken?

Why were they uttered?

Repeat the question which the lawyer asked.

What is the parable about? *A man who went on a journey.*

What do you call a man who goes on a journey? *A traveler.*

In what country was the man traveling? *Judea.*

Let us trace his route on the map. In what direction was he traveling? *Eastward.*

Through what kind of country? (Teacher supply fact about its physical features.)

What should you suppose was the state of the country at that time? *Thinly populated; road unfrequented.*

How do you know that? *Because he fell among thieves.*



Give another word for thieves. *Robbers.*

How did the robbers treat this traveler? *They stripped him of his clothes.*

What else did they do? *Wounded him.*

Explain that word. *Injured him; hurt him very much.*

How do you know from the text that he was much hurt? *They left him half dead. They almost killed him.*

“Now observe here that the aim has been two-fold. First, not to suggest the answer by the form of the question. Hence the children have been made to interpret the Biblical language by that of ordinary life. Second, not to be satisfied with single words as answers, especially with the particular word which is contained in the narrative itself, but always to translate it into one more familiar.”

Exact reproduction of the text is a good thing in its time and place, as we shall see elsewhere, and it generally is too little insisted on. But it is only one of the elements of a good lesson, and outside of classes that are within the limits of the memory ages of childhood this reproduction should come *as a climax* and by way of summing up the thought-work that already has been done. It can never be used *as a substitute* for live and original thinking. Otherwise the question-work will be lacking in its greatest charm and its greatest use—viz., as a stimulus to thinking. We must

observe the fourth great law of questioning—viz., *Vitality*.

### LIVE QUESTIONING

1. State and define the four laws of questioning thus far given.
2. Give the four purposes which we may have in questioning.
3. What objects may be in view when the question is intended to recall the form?
4. Show why an attempt to induce automatic response on the part of the pupil is wrong.
5. Show the illusion of this automatic questioning.
6. Why does this method prevent prolonged interest?
7. What is the effect of a live purpose in the teacher's mind?
8. What is the danger of set questions?
9. What is the intention of the printed lesson questions, as compared with the purpose of the teacher?
10. What will be the effect of a live question on the scholar's ideas?
11. Give Prof. Horne's statement concerning the art of questioning.
12. What share must the pupil take in the lesson?
13. Give Mr. Fitch's idea of a live question and answer.
14. What is the highest type of answer?
15. Illustrate this method of questioning from the lesson of the Good Samaritan.
16. State the twofold aim.
17. Why is reproduction of the lesson text only one element of a good lesson?

## 5. Accuracy

## THE FIFTH LAW OF QUESTIONING

We have discussed the *law of vitality* in enlivening the question process. *Stimulus* to thought is what the scholar needs. Life, *spiritual life*, is the substance and goal of our work. And yet, life cannot dispense with the outer form. There is a great deal of questioning whose proper purpose is to bring out, develop, and permanently establish *the form* of knowledge. It is not of minor importance to be able to "hold fast to the form of sound words."

The teacher's object in fixing the form is either to enable the scholar to keep the flow of the narrative unbroken in his thought, or to impress the actual text on the memory, or to gain a complete accuracy of detail.

## TYPES OF FORMAL MEMORY

Three types of memory are here involved: first, a thought-memory; second, a verbal-memory; and third, a fact-memory. All three types are called into play in a perfect mastery of Scripture. The thought-memory devotes itself to the *transition-points* in the narrative or argument, and recalls how they glide into each other and thus fixes the connection. The verbal-memory recalls *the words* in their order; and the fact-memory discriminates between the more important and less important facts or *things* in the lesson,

and holds them fast. Hence a perfect recall involves the reproduction of thought, words, and things, one or all.

#### MEMORY WEAKNESSES

Very frequently the weakness in the scholar's mind lies in his failure to have grasped and retained *the thought*—either as a whole, or in its connecting relations. Quite frequently, when the thought remains, *the words* in which it was expressed have taken unto themselves wings and disappeared in the dim and obscure mists of shadow-land. And even *the things*, the bare outstanding facts of the lesson, are easily jumbled and tumble together into an abyss of confusion.

#### THE QUESTION AS A MIND CATHARTIC AND MEMORY TONIC

The use of *the question* in all these cases is invaluable. Through it, first of all, we discover the exact state of the scholar's mind. Second, through it we gradually and steadily disentangle the confusion. Third, through it we enable the scholar to recall the fading elements with exactitude. Fourth, through it, after having clarified the mind, we set and fasten the elements more enduringly.

#### THE NECESSITY OF ACCURACY

From what has been said, it will appear that a fundamental law of questioning is *Accuracy*. We

now add to the four other laws—Mastery, Momentum, Luminousness, and Vitality—the important matter of Accuracy, and make it our Fifth Law. All questions should be conceived and framed in the spirit of accuracy.

#### THINGS THAT WORK AGAINST ACCURACY

There are many pests that work against accuracy in questioning. One of these is lack of clearness of thought. Another is the teacher's ignorance. A third is his easily growing habit of carelessness, hopelessness, and indifference. A fourth is unresponsiveness or stupidity in the scholar. A fifth is want of time during the class period to follow up the questioning process with individuals until accuracy is secured.

And there are others, particularly a lack of intellectual sincerity and honesty in the teacher's dealing with the scholar. Many questions are so framed as to protect the teacher's weakness rather than to bring out the scholar's knowledge. No teacher should yield to the temptation of throwing the scholar off the track, or of befogging the issue in order to hide and shield his own ignorance. Without becoming a stickler or a purist, the teacher should aim to *minister to accuracy* in the forthcoming answers.

The chief sinner, in many classes, is the teacher. His questions are not asked to a real purpose. He is aiming at some supposed accu-

demic requirement and not at the real thing. Or, if his purpose is real, how clumsily he takes hold of the situation. How can any one accurately answer such a question as this: "What does a little boy do when he becomes a man?" He goes to work, he puts away childish things, he spends his own money, he often forgets to say his prayers, he votes at the polls, and does a thousand other things.

#### THE OVERSCRUPULOUS TEACHER

One caution is necessary on this point. For ourselves, as teachers, we cannot lay too great stress on accuracy of thought and form in our questions; but, so long as our scholar is really thinking, we should not expect too much from him in the way of accuracy. Still less should we break in upon him and continually nag him by our corrections, or pester him to weariness with questions that riddle his answers. De Garmo\* says: "One should refrain from tripping the pupil with disconcerting questions. A race over obstacles may be diverting, but it does not conduce to steady advance. It is even better to permit the pupil to blunder through to the end of his recitation than to interrupt him perpetually with questions calculated to obstruct the current of his thought. Sometimes teachers are so impatient to obtain immediate results that they find it impossible to wait."

\* *Interest and Education*, p. 203.

And on this Weigle\* remarks: "Such over-questioning defeats its own end. It takes away the pupil's self-activity. It weakens his power of thought and expression. It makes him dependent upon the continual stimulus of questions. Give the pupil a chance to think for himself. Let him answer questions in his own way."

#### TRAINING THE SCHOLAR INTO ACCURACY

And yet, in so far as we are responsible in the Sunday-School for training into rectitude, we must have a watchful eye for accuracy. There is positively no success without it. The boy who misses or fouls a ball at the bat, or muffs it in the field is below par. The clerk who makes mistakes in addition or subtraction, the contractor who fails to take account of all the items in the bid, is unreliable and often practically useless. His work must be gone over a second time.

In any education accuracy is the greatest intellectual virtue. Says Prof. Roark: † "To know *exactly*, to remember *correctly*, to state *colorlessly* the precise facts, . . . these are rare accomplishments, and no effort should be spared to cultivate them in those for whose training and care we are responsible. A teacher cannot be too particular about the 'little things.' Children must be taught to respect *details*; and 'not quite

\* *The Pupil and the Teacher*, p. 175.

† *Psychology in Education*, p. 64.

right, but near enough' is an expression that should never be used by either pupils or teacher."

#### THE DIFFICULTY OF BEING ACCURATE

Accuracy is the sum of scientific attainment, and it requires insight, care, and patience. There is nothing more troublesome than to get the exact truth without subtraction or addition. Prof. Mathews draws attention to the painful experience of lawyers in questioning witnesses. "Even when the witness is conscientious," says he, "and anxious 'a round, unvarnished tale' to tell, the result usually is imperfect and perplexing." And yet the habit should and can be taught. "I scarcely care," says Arthur Helps, "what is taught to the young, if it will but implant in him the habit of accuracy. I do not know that there is anything, except humility, which is so valuable as an incident of education."

#### OUR GENERATION IS AVERSE TO THE LABOR REQUIRED

John Ruskin tells us that he gave three years incessant labor to the examination of the chronology of the architecture of Venice, two long winters being wholly spent on the drawing of details on the spot; and then he satirically draws attention to superficial architects who skim for three or four days in a gondola through that city on the sea, going up and down the grand canal,



and thinking that their first impressions are as likely to be true as his patiently wrought conclusions.

In Ruskin's judgment the majority of scholars do not care for accuracy. They want to be audiences only. Says he, "Everybody wants to *hear*, nobody to read, nobody to think. To be excited for an hour, and if possible amused; to get the knowledge it has cost a man half his life to gather, first sweetened up to make it palatable, and then kneaded into the smallest possible pills, and to swallow it homeopathically and be wise—this is the passionate desire and hope of the multitude of the day." But Ruskin sternly adds, "It is not to be done." "A living comment quietly given to a class on a book they are earnestly reading is eternally necessary and wholesome; your modern fire-working, smooth-downy-curry-and-strawberry-ice- and-milk-punch-lecture is a pestilent and abominable vanity."

It is for this reason that in Grade Lessons we do not try to cover great and vague stretches of ground in a single lesson period. Every lesson is limited to a specific topic. Topic is added to topic, until the whole field is completed. The average teacher loves to take the cream off of a dozen subjects in a single lesson, without any regard to waste of material or orderly process. Hence the average teacher does not like either to question others or to be questioned himself. In

many cases one must choose between being popular and being thorough. The thorough teacher will find no instrument so useful in his work as the accurate use of questions.

### ACCURACY IN QUESTIONING

1. Why must questioning often aim to establish to form of knowledge?
2. For what purpose have we already seen that many questions are asked?
3. State and elaborate the types of memory here involved.
4. What are frequently the memory weaknesses in the scholar's mind?
5. What four uses of the question in all these cases are invaluable?

THE NECESSITY OF ACCURACY.—(1) Name the five fundamental laws thus far presented. (2) Point out the things that work against accuracy. (3) What caution is offered to the overscrupulous teacher? (4) What does Prof. Weigle say concerning overquestioning? (5) Why, nevertheless, should the scholar be trained into accuracy? (6) Point out the difficulty of being accurate. (7) State the argument drawn from the method of John Ruskin. (8) What is the reason here given for the extent and method of the lessons in the Graded Series? (9) What does the average teacher love to do? (10) What will the thorough teacher find most useful?

### *6. Sustaining Interest*

#### THE SIXTH LAW OF QUESTIONING

The teacher's question may be clear and luminous. It may be accurately stated. It may even

be a live question, and yet may fail to *maintain the interest of the scholar.*

#### THE QUESTION PATH

Starting with a point of contact, at which we gain the natural hold on our scholar's attention, we must proceed along a path which will not only lead to the end in view, but which, step by step, will continue to call out and hold the attention of the class.

#### DIFFICULTY OF THIS LAW

It is not an easy thing to select and follow the path of interest through the scholar's mind, and successfully carry our gradually unfolding subject along with us to the selected goal. The first difficulty is in understanding the scholar's mind; the second is in connecting the mind with the subject, and not at any point getting ourselves switched off the track; and the third is in making such evident progress as the scholar will appreciate, so that he will continue to be on the *qui vive* for what is still further to come.

#### HOW TO MAINTAIN THE SCHOLAR'S INTEREST

The best we can do, after we know the lesson and the scholar, and select the right starting-point, and are thoroughly interested in the lesson ourselves, is to keep clearly before us what we are aiming at, and then go ahead freely and trust

our instinct as to what we shall ask at each stage of development.

#### KNOWING THE SCHOLAR'S MIND

Some of your boys may be alert and eager if you have not by your past teaching dulled their sense of expectation. Others will be dull, listless, and unapproachable. Still others will have their thoughts far away. We call them "absent-minded." We mean that they are thinking of something that is foreign to the matter in hand. They are either absorbed in some fascinating ideas and projects outside of your plan; or their minds are wandering restlessly and aimlessly on all sorts of things, and are unable to concentrate on what you say. They are present with you in body, but absent in spirit. The problem is to recall them within the circle of your ideas, and to make them eager and active participants there.

#### THE SECRET OF ABSENT-MINDEDNESS

You may not at first know the circumstances that are holding their minds so far away from yours. It may be a race or a game that is to come off tomorrow. It may be a day-dream that has taken hold of some one's fancy. It may have been suggested by some odd sight or trick or person of whom you are unconscious, but whom they see right before them. Some oddity in yourself, of which you are blissfully ignorant, or

some illustration that you have used, may have caused their imagination to have taken flight far beyond your orbit. It may be a lack of sympathy with you personally, or an antipathy to the lesson work as given in the text-book, or it may be nothing more than general apathy, unresponsiveness, and lazy mentality.

For every mind is often in what the psychologists call a state of "diffuse consciousness." It *sees* things without *noticing*, it *hears* remarks without *understanding* them. It actually *touches* points without feeling them. (Dexter and Garlick.)

#### HOW TO SOUND THE RECALL

What you need in order to recall these wandering stars to your orbit is to intensify their consciousness and concentrate it upon the point in hand. A good question will do this. It will summon their minds from vacancy and cause them to stretch out their thoughts toward you. This stretching out of their interest toward you is voluntary "attention." It is awakening their interest. Attention is defined as "the direction of the mind to any object which presents itself to it at the moment."

Attention is awakened by stimulus and maintained by variety and progress. You may yourself be destroying their voluntary attention by presenting no stimulus, by speaking continuously

in a loud monotonous voice without any variety in your vocal cadences, or by failing to make interesting progress from one thought to another.

#### THE FOUR CAUSES OF INTEREST

Attention depends more upon evoking memories and feelings than upon presenting solid thought. It depends, first, upon your recalling some ideas that have been active in the scholars' minds in the past; then, upon your connecting what you are saying with what is pleasurable or painful to their inner selves; further, upon your ability to awaken their curiosity or wish to know the unknown, and, finally, upon the satisfaction they experience in realizing that they are gaining an insight and a mental hold they have not had before.

If you know their favorite thoughts, the ways in which their minds love to run, their natural predilections, the dominant tastes that are drawing them at that particular time, and so form your question that a connection will be established between the lesson and what is thus going on within them, you will gain their attention.

#### DEGREES AND LIMITS OF INTEREST

There are many degrees of attention. When the mind is fresh and buoyant; when the body is not wearied by bad ventilation, heat, too much confinement to a single position, or other enforced inactivity; when the scholar's tempera-

ment is not sluggish; when the lesson is not too hard, so that the scholar is unable to recall any effective ideas on the subject; when the lesson is not too easy, so that the scholar finds nothing in it that he has not already known long ago; and when there is abundant sympathy and good-will between you and your scholar, you will have the highest degree of attention.

You cannot retain this attention after weariness is reached without an entire change of method. Little children, whose wills are weak, or untrained children, who have grown careless in the daily school, are incapable of prolonged effort. Unless you can stimulate their feelings in a new direction they will be lost to the remainder of the lesson.

The depth of any impression you make will depend upon the degree of attention you have evoked. Distractions, whether they come from outside or whether you yourself have inadvertently introduced them, will turn their minds elsewhere. You cannot hold your scholars against the music of a brass band that comes marching up the street. The best thing to do is to make a complete break, go with and guide your scholars' feelings in the new attraction, and then by natural transition lead them back to the subject in hand.

#### SOME FEELINGS THAT WILL RESPOND TO QUESTIONS

Good scholars will respond to you because they

want your esteem and approval; ambitious scholars will respond to any idea of rivalry you introduce; indifferent scholars may be stirred by curiosity or by appeal to feelings which you know are powerful within them.

You will not be uniformly successful in interesting the class even with the most attractive questions. There will be days—especially in heavy, oppressive weather—when the whole class may be dull or restless. Your lessons will vary much as to the material they can offer you. The spirit of the school and of neighboring classes may be against you.

But even should you feel that the lesson is an almost total failure, do not be discouraged. You cannot tell the result. You do not know at what apparently unfavorable moment some seed of life may have lodged in one of their minds and hearts, to sprout and bear fruit in later years. And even if substantial results in today's lesson work have failed, if only you have been sympathetic and drawn but a changeful and transitory interest, you have accomplished something toward *training* the scholars to stretch their minds to you next time under more favorable circumstances. You unconsciously have been *teaching them to concentrate* their thinking on the lesson and its difficult spiritual truths. They will do a little better next time.



QUESTIONS THAT MAINTAIN ATTENTION

1. State the sixth law of questioning.
2. From what starting-point and whither must the question path lead?
3. State the difficulty of this law.
4. What is the best way to maintain the scholar's interest?
5. What problem does the knowing of the scholar's mind present?
6. What are the secrets of this absent-mindedness?
7. Define what the psychologist calls a state of "diffuse consciousness."
8. By what method may you sound the recall to the minds of such pupils?
9. Define "attention."
10. State the four causes of interest upon which attention depends.
11. Give and indicate the degrees and limits of interest.
12. Point out and illustrate some of the feelings that will respond to questions.

*7. Personal Application*

THE SEVENTH LAW OF QUESTIONING

Perhaps the most beautiful illustration of our Lord's ability to reach the heart through questions, an illustration in which many of the elements enumerated above are combined, is to be found in the lesson that He taught to the lawyer who stood and tempted Him, saying, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Our Saviour began His teacher's work by the catechetical method, with an appeal to the law-

yer's mental power of recall. He asks a brief question which throws the lawyer back on the authority with which he has long been familiar, and which he recalls and reproduces from memory. This is the starting point and foundation of all that follows. The Saviour says to him, "What is written in the law?" "How readest thou?"

The answer of the man is complete and sufficient, from the formal point of view; and it is a striking testimony to the value of the memoriter method as practiced by Jewish parents with their children, and by Jewish scribes and teachers of the Scripture with their disciples.

Now, if teaching were simply "Causing another to know" in a formal sense, there would have been no occasion for our Lord to go any further. He "caused the lawyer to know." But our Lord understood full well that He had scarcely begun His teaching work. As yet He had simply gotten hold of the husks of the business. The lawyer's mind had been faithful in its reproduction, but the vital point of the truth had not dawned upon his soul. His eyes were sealed, and his mind was blind. Teaching such as this, of which there is much in our schools, and some in our pulpits, leaves the pupil where it found him. The real work of the Saviour was still to come.

In order to give the learned lawyer a spiritual shake-up, the Saviour proceeds to a further step.

Here he differs in method from our modern authorities. He abandons the scientific plan. He has begun with the catechetical method. One might suppose that with the intention of closely cross-examining a lawyer's heart, He would continue in the use of the catechetical method. He does nothing of the kind. Instead of shaking that lawyer up with a question coming from without, He so prepares the current of thought that, in a minute, the lawyer will not be able to escape from shaking himself up, and from dropping the confident attitude of presumption which up to this point he had assumed.

It is better to make a man shake up himself, than to have his teacher to take hold of him and *give* him the shaking.

So the Saviour's next step is simply an expression of full approval of the lawyer's answer; with a little side remark tacked on to the effect that all the lawyer needs to do is to act on the words so ably quoted. "Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live."

But now the lawyer, who had a conscience, and who could not honestly rule himself up to such a square, simple, exceptionless interpretation of the law, and still rest satisfied, began to be in trouble.

In this quiet way the Saviour had accomplished the first necessary point. He had destroyed self-assurance in a sinful mind. He had

gotten the lawyer into trouble with his own conscience and his own record. Uncertainty, if not condemnation, were ready to spring out and drag the lawyer's soul whither it did not wish to go. The lawyer felt himself impelled to self-defense. The whole situation had been quickly altered. From an assailant, the lawyer's mind had turned round to the attitude of self-defense. In hoping to find a limitation which was bearable, to the sweeping principle which our Saviour had gotten the lawyer to lay down with his own mouth, the lawyer felt himself obliged to ask the question, "And who is my neighbor?"

Then came that most wonderful of all stories: a pure story, in which our mind does not permit itself to rest with the Wounded Man among the Thieves, nor with the Priest, nor with the Levite, nor with the Samaritan pouring in oil and wine, nor with the Journey to the Inn, nor even with the payment of the Host for his care, but comes squarely and with tremendous force to the practical question, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?"

Notice several most important facts in connection with the masterly method of our Lord in teaching this lesson to a lawyer. *First* of all, the Saviour used a question, bringing the truth into touch with the pupil's consciousness by a formal act of memory-recall. *Secondly*, in that quiet

way in which He uttered many of the sealed parables and spoke the mysteries of the Kingdom, He brought the lawyer's soul to the point where it was forced to become dissatisfied with its own previous and dead apprehension of the knowledge it already possessed. In the *third* place, when the lawyer's mind was really submissive, and eager to learn, the catechetical method was abandoned, and though He was speaking presumably to a learned man and philosopher, the method of fundamental statement and of announcing theological principles were put to a side, and a wonderful *story* was used as the living seed to fall into the freshened and receptive soil of the lawyer's soul. Before the lawyer had an instant's time to recover from the fascinating spell, and from the onward sweep of the irresistible current with which that story rolled on—sure as fate—to its powerful end, the Saviour made the *application*, this time most personal and intense and unescapable, in the form of another catechetical question.

The first question to the lawyer had as its purpose intelligent memoriter reproduction. The second step in teaching was a statement, which was an assurance in form, but had as its object the raising of a vital question and issue in the soul. The third question had as its goal, the inevitable and final settlement by the lawyer's own soul, and against his own desire, and with a force

that could not be gainsaid, of the one essential point which the lawyer needed to see, as his own great failing.

When the reply of the lawyer came, it could not be other than it was. The lawyer was obliged to step into the net he sought to avoid, and, still more, to acknowledge the justice and propriety of the net's being spread. After the lawyer's soul had convinced itself intelligently and spiritually as to this principle, the great Teacher still further showed His divine wisdom by bringing the lesson to a conclusion with a practical command. The intellectual battle had been won, and the principle had been settled in the story. To complete and crown all, came the command of the Teacher that the lawyer should *carry his own conclusions into practice*.

Nothing can be more adequate or impressive than teaching such as this. The intellectual practice of our Lord, Who knew what was in man, and Who was Himself the truth of God, and therefore fitted to be the Light of the World and the Revealer of the Glory of God, is a wonderful example of the effective use of the question in applying it to the soul of the scholar.

#### PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. What question did the lawyer ask the Saviour?
2. With what question did the Saviour reply, and what was its purpose?

3. What was the value of the lawyer's answer?
4. What does the Saviour now say?
5. Why does He abandon the catechetical method, and with what result?
6. What question does the lawyer ask?
7. What story does the Saviour tell in reply, and with what question does He close His reply?
8. Sum up the facts in the Saviour's method.
9. What was the Saviour's closing comment?
10. Why was the Saviour an excellent questioner?

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE TEACHER'S TRAINING AND INFLUENCE *As Contributory to Effectiveness in Teaching*

#### THE NEW PUPIL

THERE has been some attempt at child-training in the Primary Department. The teacher has exercised influence over the little one as over a child. His conduct has been observed and corrected like that of a child and his study has been after the manner of a child.

As he gets higher up, things are different. If the little fellow is honestly intentioned, earnest and ambitious, and falls into the right hands, he may continue to be faithful. But there is danger that he soon become a failure in his higher surroundings. Perhaps he will stumble at once, being unable to make the new adjustment. He does not know how to think, how to study alone, and possibly he has had no training to use his mind as apart from memory. In case he was perverted already as a young child, his descent into downright incorrigibility will be rapid. Only personal influence, with firm action, will rescue him from the pathway of destruction. His new teacher is, so to say, his Last Hope.



## TRAINING THE NEW PUPIL

It is as large a part of the helpfulness of the teacher to train the new pupils how to think out their lesson, and how to study successfully, as it is to explain the subject matter while in the act of teaching. A part of every lesson period should be spent in aiding the pupil to help himself in his new work. Draw his attention to the important points, explain the difficult places and suggest how they may be mastered. It may be well, for a little while, to get the scholar to prepare part of the lesson right in the school under the teacher's eye and direction.

The first thing to do is to assume, or if necessary, to acquire, control of the class. In this effort the teacher should remember that new faces, new surroundings, and new subjects tend to produce a sense of strangeness and embarrassment in the more retiring pupils; while the more bold and brazen ones, if there be such, or those who have not a good intention toward the main object of the school and its work, will begin to inaugurate a reactionary policy in the class, or at least soon manifest an attitude of utter indifference.

## THE SCHOLAR THAT WILL NOT RESPOND

In our early dealings with the scholar, we may find ourselves unable to gain free and unembarrassed access to his mind. This will clog the

teaching. It may be his immaturity that causes the trouble. It may be his uneasiness under a new method, coupled with a feeling of strangeness toward a new teacher. Even when the scholar's good-will is manifest, your teaching may drop to a slow and painful process. But your good spirits, persevering sympathy, intuitive insight, patience and mental attractiveness, your fresh modes of approach, may gradually conquer even the most intractable.

Many a new boy is a puzzle. He appears to be diffident. It is difficult to discover and try out his real thought. He may answer only in monosyllables. Any attempt to develop freedom or independence of expression will throw him off the track as suddenly as a horse shies off from the appearance of an unaccustomed object and dashes the rider into the roadside fence. After such a catastrophe, the scholar, perhaps the whole class, may remain away the next week.

A teacher full of enthusiasm for the new work is apt to have overexalted ideas, and to expect too much, and by failing to understand the situation may come to grief, or at least to great disappointment, before confidence between herself and her class is established. It is a slow labor of patience and love to build up a real mental grasp of the lesson, unembarrassed thinking, a better power of response and exercise of judgment in expression.

In this work the teacher should comprehend what the scholar has been through under his former teacher, what sort of foundation has been laid in his mind, and what method he has been accustomed to in the department from which he has just come. A consultation with the teacher of the lower department as to the personnel of the pupils promoted, and as to the lesson material they have covered, is often helpful, although some teachers prefer not to know the previous bad record of pupils. They feel that the pupil may make a new start under new conditions, and that at any rate they will be less prejudiced and more able to give him a fairer chance, if they are not acquainted with his past reputation.

#### ALLOW FOR PECULIARITIES

Some allowance must be made for passing moods in the mind of the growing pupil. The youth has come to school fresh from other contacts. Perhaps the situation at home, or the association he has just had with companions, has depressed or elated him. His own bodily life is subject to fluctuations in energy. At times he is so buoyant that he can scarcely be kept down by restraint, and at other times he is sunken so low that he can scarcely be upheld by encouragement. The two extremes may manifest themselves in the same class on the same day. The exuberant youths will be tempted to riotous expression and

desire, while the more quiet boys will sit and sulk. The teacher must recognize this variability of mood as a fact to be expected and studied, and as something for which allowance must be made.

You must expect considerable diversity of instinct, training, character, and habits in your pupils. They bring these habits with them from earlier years, from the home, or worse, from the street. You cannot expect to chip off a habit by a single stroke. You must not be discouraged, if, even after long and patient effort, you seem to be lacking in success. Keep right on with the training, if you feel your method is right, and will bring about proper adjustment. Make great allowance when your scholars fail to cast away the old habits. Think of your own difficulties in changing your habits. It is not easy for any one to throw off the old man and put on the new.

#### A BAD INTENTION

If the *will and intention* of the scholar are not good, external correction will not reach the evil. A selfish boy, a proud boy, a sensual boy, a deceptive boy, a boy who loves vulgarity, a self-assertive boy, is not going to be cured by a few commands from you.

You should decide early as to what you are going to do with the self-assertive boy. He is likely to be so persistent, impetuous, and stormy, that he may wreck the happiness of the class. If he

is a born leader, he may carry the others with him in whatever policy he pursues. You can crush him openly, and this may be necessary, if nothing else is possible; but if you can reason with him confidentially, and privately, in such way as to open his eyes to the rashness of his course, or if you can gain a hold upon his affections, and appeal and persuade him to assist you in your effort, you will thereafter have at your command, in him, a great source of energy for service in the welfare of the whole class. It is sometimes *the best material* that the hasty teacher consigns to the Sunday-School junk pile.

#### CULTIVATE INFLUENCE

Your personal influence will count for much. If your scholars admire and trust you, they will almost blindly follow and defend you. On the other hand, if they dislike and distrust you from the start, you will be unable to stimulate them into the right paths, and your work will be uphill. The class will withhold its co-operation. What you suggest will be met with a chilly response, and whatever you attempt will be left for you to carry out by yourself, and with the consciousness that it will be a failure.

Try very hard to get and maintain the goodwill of your class, to be able to direct their enthusiasm, to enter into and enjoy their social life, and to become a leader to whom they will look

up. There must be some class-spirit in your members, of which you should be the center. This spirit is different from the mind of any single member, and flows forth from the spirits of all. It is like a rising tide which will carry you over many rocks of difficulty, and which will move on steadily after the first cataracts and rapids and shallows are passed, and will easily bear your fleet of vessels on its broad bosom into the safety of the deep sea.

In the limited period allotted to work with the class, the good teacher will often find himself unable to cover the whole lesson assigned. This should not discourage him. The successful teacher is imparting more than merely the lesson. He is doing more than training his scholars in a method. He is giving them a spiritual insight, and one point well gained will be worth more than many pages hurried over, to reach the end in the time assigned.

#### CONTROL YOURSELF

The teacher's psychic and emotional attitude, and his control of himself in the class, is important. He should afford the scholars a constant example of reasonable self-control and good judgment. He should not indulge in outbursts of impatience, or appear to be provoked. He should not be given to the utterance of snap judgments, and his use of language, while it may be

very simple, should be free from that commonplace colloquialness which sacrifices his dignity, and the scholars' high valuation of the teacher as an ideal before his eyes. He should himself be a worthy exemplar toward which the mind of the scholar may strive.

#### GETTING THE SCHOLAR'S CO-OPERATION IN WORK

One of the worst drags in a new class is the habit of mental indolence on the part of a majority of the class, and their unwillingness to be mentally industrious. It always is easy to procrastinate in Sunday-School work. When there is no compulsion, and not even any pressure in the right direction, it is difficult to get scholars to give serious attention to the lesson. This is still more difficult when there is an exciting counter-attraction. The mischief-making and reactionary element in the class, or in surrounding classes, will be sure to discover, if not to provide, some such extra and disturbing allurements.

In time, this will become exceedingly annoying, and a teacher of high-strung and nervous disposition, though he bear up in silence for a while, or attempt at various times to check the affair, is pretty sure to reach some climax of irritation, from which his vials of indignation will be poured forth upon the offending class—which, of course, is just what the class enjoys, and is interpreted by the mischief-makers as a great victory on their part.

It is a sad fact that in many classes the scholars believe it their right to choose, or at least to veto, the teacher's choice of method to be pursued in instruction. Often the lesson is so little appreciated and the scholar is so independent as to intelligent participation, and as to absenting himself, that the teacher will be unable to proceed with the good will of his pupils, and without secret rebellion, if he choose a method which the scholars feel to be repugnant. So disinclined are scholars to exertion, and so little value do parents and pupils apparently place upon Sunday-School instruction, that any method which involves thought and work for the scholar, will almost be sure to meet opposition, or at least sullenness in the class.

Some time ago an excellent teacher was given charge of an old-established class in a highly respectable congregation. He inquired what method the former teacher had pursued. He was told that the teacher talked and explained the lesson while the scholars listened. The new teacher said, "Do you not think it would be well, if, in addition to explanation, I were to ask you some questions?" The scholars said, "No." Their former teacher had never asked any questions and they preferred the method of the former teacher. The teacher said, "But I think you will learn more if you are asked a few questions, and I shall give you several questions which you can



look up for me at home and give the answers when you come next Sunday." When next Sunday came, every member of the class was absent. It is a typical instance.

The fact is that, in some cases, the Sunday-School scholar *does not want to be taught*. The scholar does not come to school for the sake of the lesson. It is really a question whether the scholar is happy in going to school at all. The spirit of unrest, a desire for change, a wish for pleasure, a dissatisfaction with any school arrangements which do not involve continuous entertainment and novelty, places the Sunday-School teacher at a disadvantage.

Therefore, one of the most fundamental parts of the work of the teacher is the cultivation of a power of self-control within the scholar of mere impulses toward entertainment and novelty. In short, the dependence that seemed natural to the scholar in his earlier years has vanished, and he is passing into those ideas and feelings of youth that inspire a sense of independence. He likes to do as he pleases, and believes this to be his inalienable right, on which no school may infringe.

But if he have a teacher to whom he is attracted, and who can inspire in him higher ideals and sentiments, and whose administration of the class is strictly just, and heartily sympathetic, the scholar will probably rise out of his crude sense of personal rights to that higher point of culture

in which it is a pleasure to be directed and governed by those who know better. The teacher should have confidence in her power to reach the pupil by inspiration, and to place a beautiful and exalted vision before his eyes to which his soul will respond. It has well been said that, "Youth has no fear in attempting the difficult, and even the impossible." After you have inspired a boy's faith, and presented to him some noble vision of attainment, his ambition to realize it by persistent effort, is truly touching. The Boy Scout movement understands this trait in youth, and uses it.

A prominent member of the American Civic Association, in speaking of what it is possible to accomplish through the co-operation of youth, has said: "If you desire enthusiasm, *go to the children*; if you wish a changed condition of affairs, *get the child's co-operation*."

Reformers nowadays take all sorts of movements to the children of the land in the public schools. And if the efficient activity of children is required in civil affairs, surely its potency should not be overlooked by the Sunday-School teacher, whose very aim is to inspire and direct the highest springs of budding energy in the child.

In the long run, *habit* counts for much in your class. If you can succeed in getting the class to work from habit, you will have accomplished

much. The youth is not afraid of effort, provided that his interest is deep and his enthusiasm is stirred. If you are too easy and yielding at the beginning, your whole effort with the class will degenerate into what Prof. James has called "soft pedagogics."

Do not forget that the pupil has a conscience. Try to find it and properly touch it. You often can bring your lens to the burning point by quietly focusing its rays on the pupil's conscience. Scholars are keenly interested in rights and wrongs, and may enter into a lively discussion. Through such a discussion, if it arise out of the heart of the lesson, and not out of a fault-finding and scolding proclivity on your part, they may be stimulated to a better practice. You can do much for the scholar by putting his mind in a position where it will discover, as a result of its own insight, the folly of a foolish choice.

#### INFLUENCING THE SCHOLAR'S HABITS

We have been speaking of the teacher's moulding influence on the habits of the class. According to Prof. James, education is "the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies to behavior." In the face of contrary tendencies acquired in the home and the day school, the teacher may find difficulty in organizing permanent habits of conduct. Yet he can lead the scholar to reason out, on his own account, the

wisdom or the folly of particular lines of action. He can stimulate his power of observation and reflection concerning habits. He can awaken a desire for refined and gentle manners. He can, through his use of language, create an admiration for correctness and precision of speech, and he can impart an atmosphere of reverence for the unseen realities, for the Lord and Saviour of Men, for God the Father, for the Church, among even the dullest of his class.

At a certain age, the springs of character are in the pupils' feelings. The teacher has no more important work than to stimulate healthy feelings, and a continuous interest in the attainment of high ideals. To one pupil this stimulus must come through congenial and active work. The open door to another may be a clear explanation of the problems and difficulties over which he has been puzzling. It will be possible to appeal to another through the gateway of his tastes. In all cases there should be consideration for the scholar's individuality and an open eye for the doorway through which a successive appeal can be made. Do no violence to the scholar's predominant characteristics. Otherwise you may cut off development, and arouse antagonism.

#### CULTIVATE AN INSPIRING PURPOSE

The teacher's personality, as well as the scholar's, counts for much. A person may know

all the principles of teaching, says Dr. McConaughy, and yet be a failure as a teacher; another person may be almost uneducated and yet be a real success in the Sunday-School. "Many of us know teachers who never even heard about lesson planning, and yet have deeply influenced the young people in their classes. Perhaps all men and women look back to such teachers as the greatest force for moulding their characters that they have ever experienced. Teaching is a deeply personal concern, where character and ideals count even more than pedagogical skill."

Dr. McConaughy emphasizes the cultivation of the right personality as the teacher's most important concern. He says, "If our pupils are to learn of Christ through us, we must be sure that we really *know* Him ourselves—that we have been saved from sin by His death on the cross, and are kept from falling into sin by the help which He daily gives us."

He alludes to the spirit that the pupils imbibe from their teacher. "When we are influenced by a person whom we admire, we unconsciously imitate his thoughts, attitude and habits. This is the supreme opportunity for the Sunday-School teacher." He deprecates Sunday-School teachers whose ideals are simply to "keep the Sunday-School going," to "keep my class quiet," to "keep my girls from dropping out," to "keep my boys from playing ball on Sunday."

He suggests that many of us owe what we are today largely to the inspiration of a long-suffering teacher during the restless and troublesome Sunday-School period of our youth. He urges that the teacher's ideal be nothing short of bringing the pupil to Christ as Saviour and Lord, of encouraging public confession of Him and growth in His likeness by following His example in service. Ideals are worth little, says he, unless they are high enough to seem impossible of accomplishment. "Those who aim low have never moved the world; those who aim high have had to fall back on God's inexhaustible strength."

#### TRAINING INTO DISCIPLESHIP

Here we come upon the great difference between a scholar and disciple. A scholar is seeking for facts in the highways and byways of literature. A disciple places himself under the instruction and influence of a master, whom he trusts, and to whom he looks up as to an ideal, and who will mould his soul and character into a habitude of perfect life.

The scholar aims at knowledge, the disciple looks for spiritual culture which takes possession of the inner man. In the one case, the object is truth for its own sake. In the other, the object is truth in the service of personality.

Our Lord trained the Twelve into discipleship, and it should be our ideal to make our scholars

His true and devoted disciples. Discipleship involves training and correction. Ordinarily pupils do not enjoy being taught discipline. Knowledge satisfies their mental longings, the curiosity of the intellect, and is therefore a pleasure. Discipline fatigues the soul and becomes a cross. The teacher's influence will do more than anything else to aid that slow growth of spiritual strength which ends in devotion and self-surrender.

Bright minds crave for and enjoy the "inspirational lecture" which often is little more than stuffing the mind with sugar plums prepared by experts and sweetened to taste. It may create an appetite for intellectual dissipation. On the other hand, the co-ordinating of the spiritual nature and will of the pupil to a prompt and whole-souled response to spiritual truth, is a more difficult thing. The spiritual interests of the child are not always those things that command the interest of the child. The apparent tastes of the pupil are an unsafe guide.

President Hadley, of Yale University, has told us that the current practice of making information take the place of discipline "is a menace to our national life for a generation to come." "As a preparation for the school of national politics, ten hours of training in civics are not the equivalent of one minute of training in order and obedience."

Growth in the spiritual life of the pupil is the main thing. It is the teacher's work to guide him into the saving truths of the Bible. This often comes most effectively through a presentation of the facts, but the main thing is to train a devoted heart into a few fundamentals. This is the glory of our living catechism. It is a personal book, and not an exposition of abstract doctrine. It applies Christian faith in a concrete way to the actual life of a scholar. It is the great training book of the Church. President Hadley asks all teachers to be true to their primary duty of educating their scholars into a strength to pursue the truth and a determination to stand by it under all conditions.

#### FELLOWSHIP

The center of a teacher's influence lies in the fellowship of master and pupil, in a participation in common ideals, joys and sorrows. Both are alike subject to the great principles of faith, and both are sharing spontaneously in the development of the inner life. Questions of intellect give way to realities of the soul. The genuine personality makes itself felt freely and with strong power of upbuilding.

Christ in us shines out in our deeds. It thus calls forth active love and loyalty in the pupil. The selfish center has been displaced. A new and spontaneous relation to authority has been established. Doubt disappears. The non-committal



attitude vanishes. The bonds of reality hold pupil and teacher together. They gather around our Lord and listen to His Word. "If ye abide in My Word, ye are My disciples indeed."

Thus the sum and substance of the Gospel is taken into the scholar's soul, and it transforms him into an ardent believer and willing follower of the Lord. The teacher has not merely given information as to the literary character and origin of the various writings of the Bible, but through his message has trained the pupil into a disciple and has built up an active and devoted Church membership.

#### INFLUENCE OF A TEACHER'S EXTERNAL BEARING

Dr. McConaughy, whom we have already quoted, gives a few hints as to the externals of a teacher's bearing as they are calculated to influence the class. He says, "The wise teacher modulates the voice, keeps it, as far as possible, at a conversational pitch, avoids high, harsh tones, and speaks distinctly. He knows that the face is the window of the soul and so he has learned the value of a smile of appreciation, and of a general look of happiness. He knows that his manners are on exhibition. He tries to see that his movements are not hurried, that his clothes are not so striking as to attract attention.

"Be sure to justify the claim that you are a gentleman or a lady. A nervous teacher makes

a nervous, unattentive class. A teacher solves the problem of maintaining order by constant interest in each pupil, keeping each one engaged, and relying less upon coercion than upon incentives to right conduct; he develops a class consciousness that makes its pupils proud that their class has the best attendance of the department; above all, he never commits the fatal mistake of losing his temper, no matter how vexatious the situation. While such a teacher may be a rarity, each can strive to become more like this ideal.

“A teacher’s attitude toward the class, limits or increases his influence over them. One teacher expects a class to misbehave and not to know their lesson; usually the expectation proves true. Another shows faith in the class; appeals to them positively, not negatively; sees each good thing they do, and judiciously praises it, minimizing failures. He says, ‘we,’ not ‘you,’ and ‘our class.’ He respects each pupil’s individuality and acknowledges the pupil’s right to differ from the teacher on certain points. He does not claim complete knowledge and is eager to learn with the class. He is absolutely sincere, and strives to be the friend of each pupil.”

#### THE TEACHER’S TRAINING AND INFLUENCE

1. Training the Child Just Promoted.
2. Helping It to Study.
3. Acquiring Control of a New Class.
4. The Scholar That Will Not Respond.

5. Do Not Expect Too Much.
6. Consult the Scholar's Former Teacher.
7. The Scholars Have Moods.
8. Their Instincts, Training, Character and Habits  
Are Diverse.
9. The Scholar With Bad Intention.
10. Personal Influence.
11. Maintaining the Good Will of the Class.
12. Failing to Cover the Whole Lesson.
13. The Teacher's Manner.
14. Mental Indolence and Mischief in the Class.
15. The Teacher's Reaction.
16. The Scholars' View of Their Rights.
17. The Scholar Who Does Not Want to Be Taught.
18. Reaching the Scholar by Inspiration.
19. Getting the Co-operation of the Class.
20. Getting Them to Work by Habit.
21. Touching the Conscience.
22. Influencing the Judgment.
23. The Habits of Home and Street.
24. Working Through the Scholar's Feelings.
25. The Teacher's Influence.
26. The Teacher's Ideal.
27. Training Into Discipleship.
28. The Inspirational Lecture.
29. Growth in Spiritual Life and Character.
30. Gained Through Common Sharing of Interest.
31. Active Love and Loyalty the Chief Motive.
32. Details of the Teacher's Influence.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE ADVICE OF AN OLD TEACHER OF BOYS

GET into touch with the parents. You will have your ups and downs in trying to do this. Some parents will ignore your request for co-operation.\* Others will promise, but fail to give it. Some will show wounded pride and disappointment that their children are not perfect and ideal in all respects. Some will try to patronize you, and as soon as you get down to actual facts, their sensitiveness will be stirred. Some will blame the Church or the School on the score of old grudges, and others will make you feel unaccountably small.

The first job for you in class is to set up in your scholars' minds a regular standard of work. When pupils try to justify themselves for neglecting it, and especially when they argue with you at the expense of truth and good manners, you often can touch their sense of honesty by a heart-searching look, or by a harmless shaft of humor.

Even before this, and always, "Win the boy." When he fails and is depressed, let your heart be touched. Say to him, "You go off tomorrow, and have a good game, and then you will feel better and more like turning a new leaf."

Have a heart for youthful sinners. Never

\* Compare Chapter II on this subject.

grow tired of suggesting a fresh start. Send your boy on his way with a bounding heart by the pressure of a friendly hand, or a quick glance of true encouragement. Handle your class with little or no formal punishment. Just check them. Prevention is better than cure.

Teach the class to regard public disobedience or trickery as treachery. Hold high before the pupil the standard of righteousness; and though he often may dishonor it, its beauty and its power will bring him back.

Cultivate personal attachment. If you do, your pupils will become your champions, and will feel as though they were willing to die for you. When you rebuke, try to set the offense in a new light, and if the culprits acknowledge their misdeed, dismiss the subject forever with the remark, "Now you have done the honorable thing."

Instil honor into the pupils' minds. Have them feel that it is right not only to confess mistakes and misdeeds, but also to take their punishment in manly fashion. Vary your method of handling disorders. It may be wise to await an opportunity to meet the ringleader casually and by himself and quietly speak to him. At other times you may have to face the whole mob and say, "This is not to happen again." Be easy with your pupils, and let them feel free and comfortable, but be inflexible about their not overstepping the bounds. Vigilance is the price of order.

Look for the leaders of the class. Get them to like you and win them to co-operation with your plans. Keep them busy and they will have no time to become leaders of misrule. When you have a stupid boy, out of whom you can get nothing, just love him.

Do not allow members of the class to blame or tell tales on one another. And when, in rare cases, they are asked a direct question, try not to have them refrain from telling the facts because of a false sense of honor. This must not be a frequent occurrence.

Make much of the presence of the dear Saviour. Have the class desire to appear well in His eye. Magnify the fact that He is their true Friend and has always loved them. Fill them with zeal to be in His service.

Do not cherish self-pride. A teacher should learn to be disobeyed without showing resentment or falling into despair.

Cultivate a high ideal of inner strength among boys. Without alluding to it, do not countenance rude and evil speaking. Discourage them from applauding those who are mean and tricky in their sports. Teach the boy to learn to bear defeat gracefully, and to scorn an advantage won by the sacrifice of truth, courtesy and honor.

Get the scholars to feel that trifling and self-indulgence are out of place. Discourage the eating of sweetmeats and the habit of chewing gum.

Do not simply *tell* your boys how to do things, but by getting them to actually *undertake* the deeds, help to mould the quality of the deeds.

At the risk of repeating some things said in the earlier parts of this book, let me close this chapter with a few words on the teacher's aim. It is to reach into the scholar's heart and the will, to open his eye to sin and salvation, to draw the soul to the Saviour, to train the child of heaven to a steady and reliable response to the love of God.

The knowledge we have to impart is a living and eternal thing. It is our own deepest hold upon Christ. It has transformed *our* thought and soul. It is not an easy, comprehensive philosophy of religion, which enables a man to think and explain truth apart from its influence on oneself. It takes its hold on others because it has taken hold on us. To teach religion by mechanical methods, treating the pupils as "little empty vessels waiting for the knowledge 'to be poured in,' " is not religious instruction at all.

What we wish to impress in its fullness is, "I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

This life eternal cannot be implanted by mechanical process. It is imparted in a thousand ways by personal contact. Our Lord, when He

began to teach, did not sit down and write a book. He did not formulate laws and rules. He did not discourse on moral truths. He simply gave the people Himself, He gave them all that was in Him.

This is true teaching, giving the scholar yourself. When the sunlight of the Christ in you shines upon the scholar, it will have a vital effect. You will shine as an ideal before his mind and soul. You will become an influence. The influence which you impart will not be the result of intellectual questioning, of disciplinary drill, nor the mere effect of subject matter taught. You will be masterful in what you do. You will set your pupil afire. You will lift duty to a thing of delight. You will awaken in the one sitting at your feet an unquenchable fountain of desire to be the greatest and best man possible. By your purity of life, by your courage and fearlessness, by your self-control, tenderness and patience, by your bringing to view the fountains of power and the streams of strength that never run dry, you will become a blessing indeed to your pupils. The freshness and the significance of your life will hold them in its spell. With allegiance that is whole-souled and intense they will follow you in your work in the school room. You will not need to resort to artificial inducements.

They will feel that the doors of their life have



opened wider after their period of communion with you. The time-worn routine and the intolerable dullness of the old-fashioned school will be a thing of the past. Both your kindness and your severity will be a tonic. You will have thrown around your little circle what Carlyle declares to be "that mystic bond of brotherhood making all men one."

You will have put a certain personal touch into their soul-life which to them is the essence of power and satisfaction. You will have shown them a kindred nature which mingles with their own. It is said that Mozart was so dependent upon sympathy that he neither composed or executed his musical compositions unless he felt he would be appreciated by those to whom he was appealing. The child-like heart is infinitely sensitive to the vibration of outside joys and sorrows. If you have captured it for the Lord Jesus, you are a teacher after His own heart.

Put some little joy into your work. A hearty child is a joyful being, tingling with joy as with fulness of life. Health is an unconscious joy. "Life itself, clear of all hindrance and disease, is an essentially joyous power. Boundless are the waves of joy, beating against the billows of sorrow, even in this world beneath. We look upon the creatures of life as they breathe and feed, and grow; as they climb, or leap, or fly, or sing; and take them all together as the happy

creatures of Him Who hath Life in Himself, and sendeth out the pulses of His joy to throb in them all. The green-carpeted earth, the air scented by their odors, the very sky filled with their gambols, ring with music. A stately joy waves in the giant wood. Even the sands of the old continents tingle with the touch of joy." If this be so of the natural world, which groaneth in bondage, how much more is it not so of the world into which has entered "the Resurrection and the Life." The touch of a glad heart will sing its way into the scholar's soul.

#### ADVICE OF AN OLD TEACHER OF BOYS

1. Get Into Touch With the Parents.
2. Set up a Regular Standard of Work.
3. Win the Scholar.
4. Prevent Disobedience.
5. Cultivate Personal Attachment.
6. Look for the Leaders Among the Class.
7. The Ideals of the Class.
8. The Teacher's Christian Aim.
9. Teach by Giving the Scholars Yourself.
10. The Effect of Such Teaching.
11. Put Some Joy Into Your Work.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE BIBLE AS A TEXT-BOOK

#### *I. For the Study of the Teacher*

##### I. WORD OF GOD

IN the Sunday-School, as we have seen, we are not getting information on the Bible chiefly as a book, as a piece of historical literature; but we are using the Bible as a living power, as God's Word, as the Word of Life.

While a full and clear knowledge of the facts in the life of Christ and of all Biblical history is important, the chief purpose of the Bible is an implanting in the soul, through justification by faith and sanctification in the Holy Ghost, of salvation in Christ.

We are not so much concerned with the fact that the Bible has built empires, that it has made heroes, that it has broken the chains of tyranny, that it has given rise to new and brilliant philosophies, that it is introducing religious liberty into the world, and has influenced art and letters, that it has evolved creeds, that it is full of powerful truths, that it has suppressed injustice, that it has freed man and woman from the chains of slavery, that it is the fountain of national life, that poets find in it their strongest imagery, that social re-

formers point back to Christ for the truth of their theories.

What the Lord desires us to find in the Bible is not a record, or a series of documents, or a depository of truths, nor a treasure house of fine art and good morals, but God's powerful and living Word, which enters the soul, to bring to it repentance and faith, to transform it and to build it into Christ, so that His Church, and all the household of faith may be presented to Him faultless and without spot or wrinkle. Our use of the Bible is as an instrument for the application of saving life.

## II. THE VARIOUS BOOKS AND THEIR PARTS

The Bible is composed of very many interrelated parts. Even the smallest of these parts, *e. g.*, the two words of Jesus, "Follow me," may have its own separate and specific spiritual use.

Every scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. Thus the Bible as a whole consists of many scriptures, written by men who "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." Though it appeared at different times, in different countries, and came from persons in different conditions of life, there is an unusual consistency of thought in it. Its doc-

trine or teaching is a unity. There is only one plan, which is progressively unfolded. All the books are parts of a symmetrical whole. Those of the Old Testament, as the history advances, grow more and more luminous with spiritual light, until they culminate in Christianity. The whole Bible is needed to properly understand any part. "Without appreciation of man's fall as narrated in Genesis, we cannot appreciate Calvary, and without the Cross we cannot understand the transgression." \*

Many truths in the Bible are repeated a number of times. What is not clearly and prominently stated in one passage, because it may there be more incidental, may be fully explained in another. Thus the Gospels, read together, throw a full light on the life of Christ, omissions in one writer being supplied by the other writers, and new points of view appearing in every writer. Thus also the Epistles become a part of the real life of the Apostle Paul when read in the light of the Acts of the Apostles. Thus, further, the types and symbols of the Old Testament turn into the realities of the New, and the prophecies of the Old become facts in the New.

"One inspiring mind runs through the whole. The volume is a *structure*, in which every part is complement to every other part. Genesis and Revelation are what Alpha and Omega are to

\* J. L. M. Curry in "Hints on Bible Study."

the alphabet in which the New Testament was written. We lose vastly of the richness and the vitality of the Old Testament if we cherish less trust in it as the Word of God than we feel in the New. Then, as for the New Testament, we cannot fully understand its meaning if we do not understand the Old. Certain entire books in the two divisions are twin volumes. Each is essential to the interpretation of the other. The Epistle to the Hebrews we cannot read aright without understanding the Book of Leviticus. The Book of the Revelation needs for its interpretation the Book of Daniel. We, perhaps, think that we all of us understand the Book of Psalms; but certain of the Psalms of David were not, and could not be, fully understood till the Gospels were written. This unity of the volume as a structure, made up of interdependent parts, is a most vital principle in the true reading of it.\*

### III. OUR OBJECT IN BIBLE STUDY

The ultimate purpose of the study of this Biblical material is the search and finding of such particular truth and its application as God would have the student gain from the book or passage under study. The teacher's purpose, according to Dr. Trumbull, is to bring forth from this treasure that which will "supply and nourish the

\* Dr. Austin Phelps in "Hints on Bible Study." John D. Wattles & Co., Philadelphia.

children of the Kingdom." The Bible further treats of the Kingdom itself, of a new and truer order of social life than earth has as yet had and of the relations of regenerate men inside this society.

Thus the teaching of the Bible is also sociological. The history of the Children of Israel as a society or state occupies the larger part of the Old Testament. The prophets of the Old Testament "declare the intimate relation of society to God, Who stands with the plumb-line in His hand among the peoples" (R. E. Thompson). The Church which our Lord founded and which is to gather all nations into its membership, is the one universal, invisible brotherhood or society, which embraces humanity under one Head. "The Bible is broad as life, having, indeed, the same Author."

#### IV. THE WAY TO STUDY THE BIBLE

In studying it certain scholars, such as Dr. George B. Stevens,\* recommend that we begin with some book of help, graphic and popular in style, that will introduce us into this great treasure house, or parts of it, and give us a general familiarity with its outlines. Other scholars take the opposite view. They maintain that the first step is to familiarize ourselves with the words and thought of the Bible itself by direct contact with it, and by making, from our own reading of

\* See "Hints on Bible Study."

it, a working outline of the whole. Read it through thoughtfully. Analyze what you have read, and arrange its contents on paper. Do not ignore any of the thought, but get all of it. In a single passage, "try to understand just what the words of the passage mean, taken by themselves; then look at parallel passages and references; after that, if necessary, consult your Bible dictionary; then take the commentary you have found most trustworthy, and see how nearly right you are. Last of all, go to the helpful introductory and more general books on the subject." In consulting books of help do not get into the habit of searching for the practical lessons deduced, without first carefully comprehending the facts and statements of the Scripture itself. People who ignore the historical truth for the sake of the spiritual truth, are in the wrong. As Prof. M. B. Riddell \* says, "God would not have revealed Himself in act and fact, as He has done in Jesus Christ, if He did not intend us to study the facts of the Gospels as accurately, as scientifically, we may say, as we do the facts in nature."

Dr. Austin Phelps emphasizes the necessity of a right spirit in Bible study. He says we need to bring to the Bible a predisposition to believe it. We need to come to the Bible in the spirit of learners desiring to be taught. We need to have

\* "Hints on Bible Study."



confidence in it as the source of all the truth it was meant to teach. We must depend largely on the book itself for its own interpretation. We must learn to make Scripture interpret Scripture. "The Bible contains a vast fund of *balanced* truths. It abounds with truths which are opposites without being contraries. 'Show me an old Bible, well thumbed, the margins of which are full of penciled references to parallel passages, and I know that it has been the comfort of some saint who became profound and comprehensive in his knowledge of the mind of God.'" We further need to have respect for those who have given much learning and thought to its meaning, and we need to pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit Who inspired the Scriptures for our use.

It is not necessary to be a master of technicalities, to gain a true knowledge of the Bible. Even those who can give to its study only a few minutes at a time will get results for teaching. Select one book. Note its general character, and make some informal plan as to the way in which you will master it. Try to grasp its course of thought given in the book itself. Then study its contents in relation to other Biblical books, in relation to religious truth or doctrine, and in relation to experience and practical life. Seek for correlated passages often indicated on the margins of your Bible, which will support and throw

light upon one another. This is interpreting Scripture by Scripture. Do not be discouraged over difficult places. Even St. Peter tells us that he did not understand everything in the Epistles of St. Paul, "wherein are some things hard to be understood" (II Peter 3:16).

The form in which the book is written has a bearing on its interpretation. Thus the book of Job is a drama, while that of Ruth is an idyl. Much of the Pentateuch consists of codes of law. The Psalms are songs and prayers. The Gospels are history. The Epistles combine an exposition of principles with exhortation at the close.

Do not force any passage to suit your own views. Consider the passage in its connection. Compare it with other similar passages. Cultivate spiritual sympathy with the Bible. Use common sense in coming to your conclusion.

Commentaries are either chiefly historical; chiefly exegetical, seeking to bring the full meaning of the inspired words before the reader; or chiefly suggestive and practical, drawing inferences for our use in the spiritual life. Before buying a commentary, get clear as to the main purpose for which you intend to use it, whether, as Bishop Ellicott\* says, it is to be "a giving of light to the mind, or a bringing of life to the soul." Choose your commentary according to

\* "Hints on Bible Study."

your greatest need and purpose. Do not read it before you feel you need it.

After you have satisfied yourself as to the meaning of a passage, look for the spiritual food for your pupils. Do not try to introduce instruction on disputed questions into your class. It takes too much time, and usually the judgment of your scholars is not sufficiently mature to reach a proper self-thought-out conclusion in technical matters. Above all, come to your study of this great source of inspired truth in a teachable spirit.

## *2. Classification and Division of Bible Material for Sunday-School Use*

We have seen that the Bible is a vast body of literature, composed of many books, all these books containing many chapters. It can no more be taught or studied at one time, than could a man eat the whole wheat crop of Pennsylvania at one sitting. It is absolutely necessary, in order to make teaching at all possible, that the Bible material be divided. Moreover the Bible itself tells us that the instruction values of the passages in it are not equal. We can find milk in it for the children and meat for the full-grown and strong. For these reasons it is certainly necessary that there be intelligent selection and adaptation of the Bible material for purposes of instruction. It further is evident that the Bible

itself justifies the use of different parts of Scripture for the less mature and for the more mature. There is something in the Bible for every age and stage of development. It is the duty of the Church to find, arrange, and adapt the Scripture material to most effective instruction. This will include, according to Prof. Coe in his work on "Education in Religion and Morals" (p. 109), "in addition to simplification, the adjustment of the subject matter to the various stages of development, and the adjustment of method to the characteristic mental standpoint at each stage."

No complete, perfect and final division of the vast subject matter to be taught has ever been arrived at. From the spiritual point of view of God's own purpose in giving us the Bible, and from the point of view of directness and simplicity, Martin Luther's catechism stands in the first rank as a practical summary of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many efforts have been made by educators to divide and systematize the Biblical material into effective portions for continuous and progressive instruction in the school, and various methods have been employed for classifying the material.

The Bible contains over a million words. In the size of this book, it would fill 4400 pages. To complete the study of it in fifty-two Sundays would require the teacher's covering over 80 pages every Sunday. It is an impossible task.

He could not even read the text to the class, to say nothing of explanation. Hence not only division, but selection of the material must be made. On what principles shall the selection be made? Not all the parts are equally important. Some are more vital at one period in the scholar's life, and some at another. A good workman or teacher is he who rightly divides the Word of Truth. Any good method of classification has three qualities, viz., importance of the material, orderliness of sequence, and advance in development.

How did the Church divide the Scripture for teaching in its schools?

#### I. TRUTHS AND HISTORY

The Protestant Reformers, who translated the Scriptures into popular language and made it a people's book, divided it into history and doctrine. They taught the former in Bible histories, and the latter in the catechisms. In other words, they laid main emphasis on the substance of the Bible, on the facts and on the truths, and regarded this as more important for the scholar than giving attention to the literary form and structure of the material.

#### II. COLLECTIONS OF IMPORTANT TEXTS

In the eighteenth century, text-books contained a treasury of the most important and inspiring

passages for committing to memory, and small cards with memory verses for distribution to the pupils, came into current use.

### III. QUESTION BOOKS

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the question form, which originally was applied in the catechism to the truths or doctrines of Scripture, began to be used for the teaching of the history also, and small question books, compactly covering the history of the Bible in question and answer, appeared.

### IV. LESSON LEAVES, ETC.

After the middle of the century came the method of printing a single carefully selected section or passage, or certain number of verses, from the Scripture itself, with explanations and comments, in the form known as lesson leaves. Pocket editions of single books of the Bible, with brief notes, for the use of scholars in Sunday-School, also appeared.

In the twentieth century, and at the present time, although lesson leaves are still in partial use, the plan of grading the material according to the needs of the scholar has become most prominent, and various "graded systems," beginning with the more simple and childlike facts and truths, and rising in the higher grades to a more detailed and complex study, have become numerous.

A multitude of publications for all sorts of purposes, and from every possible point of view, frequently in compact form, are now being published for the use of the Sunday-School teacher. The chief difficulty of the school and of the teacher is to reach a right principle of selection, and amid the great volume of literature that constantly appears, to find that which will be contributory to the work under the plan that has been selected.

### *3. Limits of Use of the Material in the Allotted Time*

The greatest difficulty in teaching the Scripture in Sunday-School is to use the small amount of time assigned for this purpose most advantageously, without crowding too much material into it on the one hand, and without trifling with the work on the other. To this difficulty is added that of keeping up the connection in the mind of the scholar, after an interval and a break of seven days. Hence the necessity of definitely marking out for at least a year in advance the quantity of lesson material to be used, and the assigning of it in suitable portions, a part for every Sunday, to the teacher and his class. The danger is that the lesson will include too much, or not enough. In the one case the teacher will become crowded for time, and in the other he will not use the time profitably, and hence not

make progress. Few teachers have vim and strength enough to mark out their own lessons Sunday after Sunday, when the quantity assigned in the textbook does not fit to the amount of time at their disposal and to the ability of the class.

#### *4. Order in the Use of the Material*

This order must be fixed in advance, and understood by all. Otherwise no preparation of the lesson would be possible, and no regular progress would be manifest. Order is the fixed mechanism of method. Wherever there is common action, there must be an accepted common order. Its mechanism is as needful in the school room as on the pianoforte, though equally painful in both, if it obtrude itself.

Order is not the law of stagnation, but of life. The eye of the poet has seen this. "The days and years, the moon and tides, the mornings and evenings, the eclipses and even wandering comets, have their times exactly set, and their rounds exactly measured. We can make up their almanac for the most distant ages and cycles. What we call the almanac is an exhibition to the eye of the grand principles of routine in nature. So far the vast empire of being is grounded in a sublime principle of routine everywhere manifest; it is ordained for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. And without this, or apart from this it would be only a medley of confusion, a



chaos of interminable disorder. What could we do in a world where there are no appointed times, no calculable recurrences, no grand punctualities, where the seasons are moved in different orders of successions, days and nights coming at random, and staying for such time as they please, the heavenly bodies a chapter of celestial accidents in their motions, the moon quartering once a month, or ten times a month, the tides rising with or without the moon, the dews falling on the snows, and the snows on the verdure of June—such a world would really be valueless; we could do nothing with it, and simply because it has no fixed times. And for just this reason God has consented to inaugurate the sublime routine necessary to its uses, determining the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation.

“And so very close does God come to us in this matter of times or of natural routine, that our heart beats punctually in it, our breath heaves in it like the panting tides of the ocean, and the body itself, and with it also the mind, yes, even the mind, is a daysman only in its power, a creature of walking and sleeping, of alternating consciousness and unconsciousness, like the solar day and night of the world.” \*

If order is heaven's first law, why should the teaching in our schools be orderless? Should our Church schools indeed have less order in their

\* Hill, “Geometry and Faith.”

system than the common schools of the land? Are the fields of Scripture the one place where there are "no appointed times, no calculable recurrences, no grand punctualities," where the days and the nights, the beginnings and the endings, the goals and the first principles come largely at random?

Periodicity and progress, law and life, metes and bounds, grades and growth through them, are healthy laws in the spiritual, no less than in the natural world. Let us teach the babe, teach the child, teach the youth, teach the man, teach the sage, till each and all be filled with the fullness of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is all and in all.

##### *5. Use of the Material in Connection with the Christian Year*

The Christian Year connects the "days of our life" with Christ. It reclaims and reconstitutes time and nature for Christ. It subordinates and consecrates the seasons with all their variety and beauty of change to the service of Christ. It introduces a world-order of days and weeks based not on the old Roman war-god Janus (January), but on Him Who was "before all worlds," and Who has redeemed us and made our life worth while. The Christian year, so to say, sanctifies our time. It is a silent and constant witness against the inroads of secularity in American life.

For Sunday-School and for the study of Scripture, the important thing is that the Church Year opens up times and a regular and widely recognized order for our growth in Christ. It puts a heavenly order into our religious life, replaces a secular and subjective mechanism of order with one that is Christian and divine. It gives every important item in God's saving Word a special time and place. It rescues salvation from our feelings whether they are apathetic, or going on a rampage, and gives us a simple plan for piety and devotion. We hear so much of the value of systems in business and in study, in the formation of character, and in personal habits of life, in college curriculums, and in clearing-house accounts, that it seems odd that up-to-date Christians should fail to appreciate the value of proper system in our spiritual thought, and to build up spiritual truth and life.

#### I. THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

Do not believe that the Christian Year is a figment of Romanism; that it is dead formalism; that it interferes with liberty and spontaneity; that preaching should be on the spur of the moment; that teaching should be without connection of preceding and succeeding events, and without relation to the predominant thought and festival feeling of the day. The Church Year is a living cycle, a circle of life which feeds God's

complete Gospel into the frame of our days, and enables us to grow progressively rather than sporadically in truth and grace.

In the Church Year there is a time for everything. The advantage of good order is gained. One does not depend upon chance, upon recent experiences of a teacher's mind, upon the planning of a committee, or upon an individual system of our own, in order to make progress. The Church Year is a Church system. It introduces order in place of confusion.

In the Church Year everything comes in its suitable time, in its expected relations, in its natural proportion, as a part by itself, and as a part of the whole. There is a continuity of impressions, a progressively developing emphasis on the great facts in the life and death of Christ, and the great facts in conversion, justification and sanctification, which cannot be secured by a passing schedule of lessons. Each thing is complete as a part, and each thing has the advantage of being seen in its connection, and the relations are hallowed by the sacred atmosphere that breathes through the whole. We not only study a truth, but we live it. The season of the year reminds us of the truth, and the oftener we pass through the years, as we grow older, the more forcible is the seasonable reminder.

The order of the Church Year is the natural order of the Christian life. It is the atmosphere

of salvation, of faith and peace and joy and hope, in which we live and have our being. It is that in which our souls are to grow, and from which the rich fruits of our inner life will develop. It is the order of our public worship, and it will color all our personal thoughts.

## II. THE CHURCH YEAR AND INSTRUCTION

The Christian Year of the Church cannot but affect our school instruction. In so far as the scholar is to be planted by the still waters of everlasting life, and is to be trained to an appreciation and use, in an orderly and living way, of God's means of grace, the plan of the Church Year should be a controlling feature in our instruction.

But it also is true that the Church Year must not be in exclusive control of the instruction. There are other orders of truth, independent of the Church Year, which are important—yes, vital in the development of the spiritual life of the child, and which must be pursued on their own account, and dare not be artificially chopped up and pieced out into a harmony of the year.

Every indispensable branch of instruction for the growing Christian has a right to its own order, and should be accorded a proper place for its own inner development. This applies to history and to teachings. The order of the Catechism, at certain times and seasons, and with

certain scholars, becomes more important than the order of the Church Year. The same is to be said of Bible History. The order of the Gospels as arranged in the Church Year is not the exclusive order designed by God, in which they are to make an impression upon the mind. It is, in fact, not the original order. This original order, the order of history, has its important rights, as history, when we are training the mind in knowledge.

The life of Christ has a right to be studied not only as it fits itself into the Church Year, but also as Christ Himself lived it, as it is recorded, in various ways, by the separate Evangelists. It is most important to study the Epistles, especially the great Epistles on Justification, as Paul wrote them, and to apprehend his plan and purpose in giving them to the Church.

The history of the Old Testament, as preparatory to the coming of Christ, and by which alone much that is in the life of Christ can be unsealed, and which also shows forth, on a large scale, the dealings of God with His covenant people has a right to be studied in the order in which they are given us in the books. The Psalms also have a right to independent use. It is right and proper to ground our pupils in a thorough knowledge of the facts, and in the historical order in which the facts followed each other. It is proper also to

give them connected views of the characters, the institutions, the doctrines that we meet on the pages of God's Word.

There should be a place for all these things in a comprehensive system of instruction. Exceedingly artificial would be any plan of instruction which would sacrifice all these necessary orders for the order of the Church Year. The one is to be upheld, and yet the other, in the Church's instruction, is not to be neglected.

Those who would confine all the instruction to the Gospels and Epistles of the Church Year would not be teaching God's Word as He gave it to us. God has had regard for the principle of history, for the principle of variety, for the principle of adaptability to various stages in life, and it would be a narrow extreme either to reject the order of the Church Year or to confine one's self entirely to the Gospels and Epistles. In the teachings of the Church and School, both doctrine and facts on their own account have their rights. But they are not exclusive. The main thing is the planting and growing of the child in Christ in a continuous Christian life. This is best done in the atmosphere of the Church Year.

"The Church Year," says Dr. Krauth, "reproduces the life of Christ in the Church, which is His Body in the world. It brings before us all that has been done in redemption in the ages past, and looks forth to all that redemption is to do in

the ages to come. It repeats the central history of the world. It is the drama of God's working for men; the solemn mystery whose last act circles again into the first. It is the sublimest conception which man has associated with the flight of time.

"The Church Year is too great a thing to be a mere human device. It is a token of the continued ordinary working of the Holy Ghost in His Church, a secondary revelation. It brings before us in its circle, hoping and waiting, and fruition; birth, sorrow, death and triumph; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from the throne of the ascended Redeemer; and at the end, 'the diapason closes full' in the Trinity, which is the center of all facts and all doctrines. Having in the Church Year followed Christ in what He does for us, and thus having been led into the mystic unity of the Holy Three and Undivided One, we give ourselves, through the rest of the year, to the shaping influence of Christ in us. *For* us and *in* us are the keynotes to the great divisions. Justification is the theme of the winter part; sanctification of the summer part. Up to Trinity, we have the objective, of which all that follows is the subjective. The year divides itself between foundation and edifice; between facts which underlie doctrine, and the duties which rise upon faith; first Christ to earthward; then, we to Christward."



The Church Year is a beautiful evergreen wreath, with five or six large festive immortelles arranged at proper intervals upon the circle, the intervening space filled out with equally beautiful, but less conspicuous material. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Palm Sunday and Passion, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, while they are the large and striking flowers in the wreath, are bound together by the equally vital and equally useful smaller vines and buds and leafage and moss that fill the full circle of God's plan of salvation.

In the Roman Church there has been added to this wreath an immense amount of hay, and straw, and stubble, and of glittering colored-glass ornament; whereas in other of our churches the wreath itself has been torn to pieces, and the vital matter, which is the connection of the festive events with each other, and the unity of God's plan as a whole has been sundered. According to their preference, some of the churches have retained Christmas and Easter; many of them have thrown aside Advent, Epiphany, Passion, Good Friday, and consigned Ascension, even Whitsuntide, and especially Trinity, to the ash pile; and some few of them are sorry that Christmas and Easter have not gone thither also.

But we retain the whole wreath, not only in its chief flowers of beauty, but also in the continuous development of life that encircles, and

fills with a divine halo, the ever recurring natural period of our days.

### III. THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE'S SEASONS

We Christians live a sacred life, and natural things themselves become a reminder of the sacred. Fall, to us is not characterized chiefly by the softness of Indian summer; or the scarlet and gold coloration of the leafy wings of the trees; but Fall becomes the time when our souls look forward to the Last Things; to the First and Second Advent. Christmas is not chiefly to us a time of giving presents, and of the appearance of Santa Claus; but it is chiefly a season of Holy Joy which overtakes earth and heaven because of the coming of the Christ Child. January and February are not to us times of starting the year anew, and engaging in a solid week of prayer; but they are times when the glory of the Christ Child shines out from his heart into all the world and to most distant shores, and when our activity is not merely an earthly humanitarian strain, but is sun-dipped and radiant with the grace and glory of the Word made flesh.

The rough days of March are not to us chiefly a time of bodily struggle with the rude elements; but they are a time when our soul goes down into the depths in a sympathetic appreciation of the sufferings of his Lord. Spring is not chiefly a time when the world awakes, and the grass

grows green, and the flowers begin to bloom; but it is the time when our hopes for eternity, when the certainty of His full justification, when the triumph of Christ over sin and Satan are assured to us by Easter-tide and the events that follow it.

#### IV. LIVING IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

The Christian, through the Church Year, lives the life of Christ over again, year after year. He lives himself into God's plan of salvation. The Gospel springs and grows before his eye, as he takes step after step, in the outer framework of his days. His whole heart is deepened and consecrated, not by stray events and feelings, and by movements organized on earth to affect his soul, but by the Gospel of God itself. With every recurring Sunday, some important phase of salvation, which he greets as an old and familiar friend, kindly but earnest in its warnings, joyous and beautiful in its promises, stands before his threshold. Thus every Sunday acquires a character as distinctive as Thanksgiving Day and Washington's Birthday take upon themselves in our national life. Thus every Sunday blooms in its own well recognized scent and hue—it is an old friend, which endears itself to him, and to which he looks forward throughout all the week with heightened love and interest. Thus life upon earth becomes a progressive imaging of the still more glorious round of life in heaven.

## V. CONNECTING THE INDIVIDUAL WITH THE GROUP

Thus, too, each individual Christian feels himself a part of the great communion of saints, all of whom are being influenced by the same truths, thinking the same thoughts, reading the same Gospels, praying the same prayers and singing the same hymns throughout the world. We need something more than a week of prayer. We have a united prayer throughout the world *on every Sunday*—and, what is more, we have a united Word of God. The Word comes to us, in its selection, not at the option or according to the mood of the preacher, but from out of the full heart of the whole Church.

Worship is not an individual thing. Warning and edification are not a matter of impulse. Every separate day is one part of God's own greater whole, is prepared for by all that has preceded, is itself a preparation for all that follows it, and shines in the glory of its own divine lustre.

With such a wealth of direct power and indirect association, with such a system of continuous operation upon the human heart and soul, with such a progressively self-endearing heritage, come down to us from the long past—who would throw away the wreath of the Church Year for a service made by some ecclesiastical committee, for Scripture selections chosen on a Sunday morning half hour before service, while the

preacher is looking over the pages of his Bible, and for hymns put on the program because the choir likes to sing them for their catchy air!

No. Let us take God's own framework of the year, His own round of golden days, burnished by the glowing rays of the sun, and darkened by the stormy bosom of the clouds. Let us take Christ's own Body, the Church. Let us place therein the glorious living roses of God's own salvation, not in their solitary beauty, but in their own living order and connection, and then we shall have that, which for grace, and strength, and completeness, is worthy of being set alongside of nature herself in her finest upbuilding of life and beauty and strength.

When Nature tries her finest touch,  
Weaving her vernal wreath,  
Mark ye, how close she veils her round,  
Not to be trac'd by sight or sound,  
Nor soil'd by ruder breath.

So still and secret is her growth,  
Ever the truest heart,  
Where deepest strikes her kindly root,  
For hope or joy, for flower or fruit,  
Least knows its happy part.

No—let the dainty rose awhile  
Her bashful fragrance hide—  
Rend not her silken veil too soon,  
But leave her in her own soft noon,  
To flourish and abide.

—*John Keble, THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.*

THE BIBLE AS A TEXT-BOOK

1. THE SCRIPTURE MATERIAL.

1. The Teacher's View of It as a Whole.
2. The Various Books and Parts.
3. The Teacher's Purpose in His Bible Study.
4. How the Teacher Shall Study the Bible.

2. CLASSIFICATION OF THE MATERIAL FOR PEDAGOGICAL USE.

*"Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth."*

1. Truths and History.
2. Collections of Important Texts.
3. Question Books.
4. Lesson Leaves.
5. Pocket Editions of Books.

3. LIMITS OF USE OF THE MATERIAL IN THE TIME ALLOTTED FOR TEACHING.

4. ORDER IN THE USE OF THE MATERIAL.

5. USE OF THE MATERIAL IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

1. The Christian Year.
2. The Church Year and Instruction.
3. The Sacredness of Life's Seasons.
4. Living in the Life of Christ.
5. Connecting the Individual With the Group.

## CHAPTER XX

### A GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE LESSON PLAN

WE now are ready to get down to planning our actual teaching work, as we engage in it from Sunday to Sunday. The principles and methods we may have selected from the preceding chapters or from elsewhere, for use in class, are to be interwoven into one, and put into operation. In the "Outline" given below, the work of teaching has been divided into five parts:

1. Preparing for the Lesson.
2. Opening the Lesson Period.
3. Introducing the Lesson.
4. Teaching the Lesson.
5. Closing the Lesson Period.

The "Outline" we suggest is a complete schedule which the teacher should condense and adapt to his own need. Some of the points are already a part of his experience and practice. Others he may be able to improve on. Circumstances and lack of time will prevent him from carrying out the entire program. He must bring the process, as here given, within the limits of what is practicable.

This does not mean that he simply should select those points to which he has already accustomed himself. He should check up his own

method by what is presented here and should decide as to what on the whole will render him more effective, remembering that every prearranged scheme should be adapted to one's own individuality by the use of good judgment. If he will concentrate on a few points at a time as they commend themselves to him, without attempting too much, he can later turn his attention to other points. The "Outline" follows:

## THE ACT OF TEACHING

### HOW SHALL I TEACH

#### FIRST PART OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

##### *I. Preparing for the Lesson*

1. Familiarizing One's Self with the Lesson Material.
2. Getting the Right Light on It.
3. Finding the Range; that is, Selecting Your Main Purpose.
4. Thinking Out the Method and Organizing the Material under It.
5. Fixing the Pivotal Points of the Story, or of the Outline of Thought, Firmly in Mind, with a Clear View of the Way in which the Transition from one point to another is to be made.
6. Thinking Out the Important Parts that are Capable of Illustration.
7. Elimination and Compression.
8. Deciding How Best to Sum Up.



9. Selecting the Most Valuable Applications.
10. Making a Plan of that Part of the Work in which the Pupil Co-operates with you.
  - (1) Memory Work.
    - Selecting It.
    - Adapting It to Individual Capacity.
    - Noting It down for the Pupil.
  - (2) Planning the Lesson Questions.
  - (3) Planning Topics or Points for Discussion.
  - (4) If there be Research or other work for the Pupil at Home, Preparing Memoranda for each Pupil.

SECOND PART OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

*II. Opening the Lesson Period*

1. A Few Words Showing Interest in the Welfare of each of the Pupils, thus securing attention and concentration on what you are saying.
2. Expressing optimism as to the Day and the Work.
3. Preliminary Memory Work.
  - (1) Recitation of Assigned Work, with remarks on it.
  - (2) Review of Past Work.
  - (3) Assignment of Memory and of other Preparation Work for the following Sunday.

THIRD PART OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

*III. Introducing the Lesson*

1. Opening Remarks on the Lesson.

- (1) State your Subject.
- (2) State your Intention or Object, so far as it is wise to divulge it.
- (3) If necessary, use Devices to Gain or Renew the Scholar's Interest in the Subject.
- (4) Quickly touch on the Big Things of the Lesson: Get the facts and the perspective clear.

FOURTH PART OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

*IV. Teaching the Lesson*

1. Develop the Text or Subject under the Method chosen, on the basis of your Mental Outline, prepared during the week, and as modified by the necessities of today's situation.
2. Sum up the Lesson in a few words.
3. Make the Application.

FIFTH PART OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

*V. Closing the Lesson Period*

1. Say a few words Interesting the Scholar in the Subject and Material of next Sunday's Lesson.
2. Again Call Attention Collectively, or, if possible, Individually, to the Work Assigned for next Sunday.

This "Outline" needs some explanation to make it more clear, and its usefulness more apparent. Following it in the order given, we begin, in the next chapter, with an exposition of the Teacher's Preparation for the Lesson.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THINGS TO DO IN THE ACT OF PREPARING THE LESSON

MUCH has been said and written for teachers concerning the preparation of the lesson. Preparation often is neglected because the teacher in his arrangement of his time during the week has not found any place for it. No good teacher intends to neglect preparation, but at times he is overweighed with duties and appointments, or perhaps with a feeling of discouragement. Then his preparation will be undertaken heroically perhaps, but hopelessly and without intelligent perception of what is to be done. If teaching is a bore and a trial to you, you will lack interest in the teaching process, will fail to regard this as sufficiently important to prepare for it, will fall into carelessness and slipshod ways, and the result will be a constant sense of failure, which, as time goes on, may become almost unendurable. This sense of failure is felt by many faithful teachers, because of difficulties with which they have to contend in the scholars, or for other reasons. They do not realize sufficiently that it is our privilege and should be our joy, or as our Saviour says, our "meat and drink," to plant the harvest, and that the reaping thereof may come only after

many years and by others than ourselves. The Saviour's experiences in sowing the seed in the hearts of the multitudes, and in training the Twelve, should convince us that we are not to grow pessimistic because of apparent failure.

#### GENERAL PREPARATION—THE TEACHER'S NOTE-BOOK

You need a working knowledge of the path for the coming year. To this end I know of nothing better than "The Teacher's Note-Book," described by Amos R. Wells. The book should have at least fifty-two pages, one for each lesson of the year. Extra pages, for a list of scholars and incidental memoranda, will be a helpful convenience.

"Head each page," says Mr. Wells, "with the title of the lesson, and the Scripture reference; and, I am old-fashioned enough to add, with the Golden Text, or at least with some wisely chosen Bible key-verse.

"You will plan your teaching far ahead, using these blank pages. For instance, take the matter of practical helpfulness to each of your scholars. You have noticed slothfulness in Edith, and want to spur her out of it. You look ahead. Ah, here, on May 13th, is just the lesson she needs. You note on that page: "Energy and industry—(Edith)." In the same way you go through your class, fitting the needs and the lesson teachings.

Not that you will forget Edith till May 13th comes, nor that on May 13th you will say a word in the class about Edith's failing. But it is a great advantage in teaching, as you will discover, to take special thought for a certain scholar in the teaching of each lesson, and in planning for it, and praying for it beforehand. This can hardly be accomplished without some such note-book arranging as I have described.

"Again you will use your lesson note-book for that comprehensive forward look over the lessons which quite doubles their value. The first question regarding each lesson is, 'What shall I emphasize? What truth, among the many truths suggested here, shall I cause to stand out in the scholars' apprehension and memory?' On the wise selection of these central truths, and the forcible insistence upon them depends very largely the teacher's success. You will need to look far ahead, that the truths you choose for emphasis may have relation to one another, may not duplicate one another, but be cumulative. This again, is hardly to be brought about except by the use of a note-book.

"Once more consider the matter of illustrations. Your lesson note-book will keep steadily in view the topics of your teaching far ahead. If you are a wise teacher you are always on the lookout for teaching material. Every walk through the woods gives you a teaching parable.

Every copy of a newspaper gives you an illuminating incident from current history. Every book brings you a fine anecdote or appealing thought. Every day your observation of the men and women around you is rich in illustrative material. Much of this is entirely unsuited to the immediate Sunday-School lessons, and will be altogether lost unless you have this store-house in which to garner it, placing parable, current event, passage from book or from life, just where it will be most useful, though on a page ten months hence.

“As you read your Bible, the lesson note-book will be constantly by your side. Every true teacher knows that the Bible is its own best interpreter. Not a passage you will read but has its bearing on some of the lessons to come. It may not relate to next Sunday’s lesson, but to the lesson five months distant. Very well; note it on the proper page, and you have won the strongest ally for the teaching of that lesson, when you come to it.

“The note-book should be small enough to carry with you constantly. Carry with it the part of the Bible you study during the year—at least as far ahead as your pocket allows. For this purpose I strongly recommend every teacher to sacrifice one Bible, cutting it apart and taking from time to time just the selections that are under immediate consideration.

“The chief value of the lesson note-book to the teacher will be in the cultivation of the habit of thinking ahead over the lessons to come. Until you have tried it, you have no idea how this longer consideration enriches the lesson with many helpful thoughts and practical illustrations, how it clarifies its teachings, how it adds force and confidence to your work, and how it binds the lesson together, week to week and month to month. Faithfully use your note-books, and you will come to regard them as your chief pedagogical aid.”

### SPECIAL PREPARATION

#### I. GETTING THE MATERIAL READY FOR NEXT SUNDAY

The first step in preparing the lesson is to *get the material ready for next Sunday*. Take your Bible and read the section through carefully as a whole. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are the Facts?
2. What are the Truths?
3. What is the Fundamental Thought of the Passage?
4. What is the Best General Application to your Class that occurs to you?
5. Try to think yourself into the passage, and take your Work to God in Prayer.

The second step is:

## II. GETTING THE RIGHT LIGHT ON THE LESSON

This light will be found in the various *connections* of the lesson. Therefore consider:

1. The passage as Literature.
2. The passage as Inspired.
3. The passage as History.
4. The Point of Contact and General Connection in the plan of the present Lesson Series.
5. Connection with last Sunday's and next Sunday's Lesson.
6. Connection with Present-Day Thought and Problems.
7. Undertake Suggestive Collateral Reading.

## 1—2. AS LITERATURE AND AS INSPIRED

In order to *get the right light* on your lesson material, it is desirable first of all that you comprehend the literary connection of the passage with the book from which it is taken. For the teacher should have some understanding of the book as a piece of literature, and should make up his mind as to the author's purpose in writing this particular section. But there is a higher Author of Scripture than the human writer and hence the section should be viewed as having been inspired, and the question should be asked, "What was the purpose of the Holy Spirit in having this lesson written?" The connection of the truth taught in this lesson with God's plan and work of salvation should be sought.



## 3. GETTING THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION

The times in the midst of which the passage was written, and the environment of the writer, have left a general imprint on the passage and perhaps deposited in it certain details of fact and thought that should be understood. The passage also bears a relation to the historical thread in the book of which the section forms a part. Reading and investigation to secure this historical connection will be a help.

## 4—5. THE CONNECTION IN THE PRESENT SERIES OF LESSONS

The point of contact and connection, of the lesson now being studied, in the plan of the Lesson Series, often is important and suggestive. In the schedule of lessons read all the subjects preceding and those following the one you are studying. Ask yourself, "Why was this particular subject and passage of Scripture chosen for study at this place? What contribution does it make to the whole series?" Give special attention to the connection with last Sunday's lesson and with the lesson for the Sunday following it. As you go on in this way from Sunday to Sunday, the cumulative force of the whole series will add powerfully to your insight, and become a stimulus to the study of the part immediately in hand.

## 6. TIMELINESS OF THE SUBJECT

Ask yourself the question, "How does this les-

son connect in general with present-day thought and present-day problems?" Is there any truth in it which has a special bearing on subjects in which your scholars are naturally interested at this time? Has it any teaching on these subjects which could be utilized for instruction?

#### 7. COLLATERAL READING FOR SUGGESTIONS

The teacher should know a great deal more on his subject than he expects to give or than he possibly can give to his scholars in the course of a single lesson. But he must constantly guard himself, in actual teaching, against the danger of over-extending himself at any particular point because of more ample knowledge. The more he knows, the more diligently must he prepare himself for actual impartation by rigid elimination and compression.

His possession of abundant knowledge is a great advantage. It gives him strength and confidence, a broad outlook, a freshness of viewpoint, and the certainty that he will not become confused in case any unexpected question should arise, the answer to which he has not prepared himself. As he has time at his disposal, he should therefore plan to take up collateral reading on the subject matter of the lesson.

In the measure in which he has time to give to it, he should aim to read fully either on the subject underlying the whole course of lessons, or on

points bearing on the particular lessons in hand. It is not easy to get books that will be exactly in the line of his desire, nor easy to get quickly from any book that which he thinks he may need for his purpose. Knowledge is adjusted to so many different scales, and presented in so many variant perspectives, that he may be disappointed in a dozen recommended books, before he secures one that is quite satisfactory. The case sometimes is not very different from that of trying to find a needle in a haystack. Or the quantity of relevant material offered him is too extensive, as though one were to go to a dealer's for a half glass of cream and be told that they sell only milk (from which the cream is to be skimmed), and in not less than five-gallon lots.

When you make up your mind to do collateral reading a long way ahead, and take time for the perusal and study of pertinent works, you will have pretty well mastered the subject before the arrival of the hour when you must begin the study of the specific lesson in question. Do not try to crowd a month's reading into a half hour's study just before the opening of Sunday-School, and expect to be able to use the material acquired successfully. Consult reading lists that may be furnished you by your pastor, by editors of Sunday-School Lessons, by commentaries, by journals on the lesson, and in some cases by public libraries. If possible, look through a number of

books recommended, and get a cursory judgment of them, before selecting those that you intend for permanent use through purchase.

It may be possible to form a Reading Club in your school, through which you can share with other teachers in the purchase and use of books. A Teachers' Library can be started by the school, with the aid of the pastor. Make free use of a good Bible Concordance, and of marginal references in your Bible, so as to gather parallel and explanatory material from the Scripture itself.\* Do not be discouraged if for a time your efforts to secure suitable literature for collateral reading, and your work on the books, turn out to be of little practical help. Keep on experimenting. In this line, experience is frequently worth what it costs, though much of the gain be indirect and not immediately available.

### III. FINDING THE EXACT RANGE OF THE TARGET FOR NEXT SUNDAY

The first step is:

#### 1. To Get the Author's Aim.

In writing the passage of Scripture that consti-

\* Johns' Reference Passage Bible, the Alpha Publishing Company, Lincoln Neb., 1908, printing out the references in a column parallel with the text; or the Scofield Reference Bible, Oxford University Press, 35 West Thirty-second Street, New York, 1909, with a system of topical references to the greater themes of Scripture and very brief annotations, may be helpful.

tutes your lesson for the day, its author had a purpose. That purpose may be slightly or greatly different from your own. But you cannot be a true and reliable exponent of Scripture without understanding the original aim. A commentary will help you on this point. The idea of the original writer, and not your own idea, is fundamental. For your real office is that of an interpreter, and it becomes your duty to find out the message originally intended, before you proceed to modify or adjust it for purposes of impartation.

Ask yourself the question:

2. What parts in this Aim, general—of the lesson as a whole—or special—of single phrases or clauses—will take effect on your own class.

There may be as many as a dozen subsidiary purposes, each with good teaching value, to be found in the verses, and from which you will have to make a small selection for your use.

In the third place:

3. Construct and Fix in your mind the one main Aim or Purpose to which you determine to adhere resolutely in your exposition next Sunday. Examine the whole lesson in the light of this purpose. By this time you will have at your disposal, so to say, the specific value which has been extracted by you for your use from the passage of Scripture under study.

You are now ready to proceed to

## IV. THINK OUT AND DECIDE THE METHOD TO BE EMPLOYED,

which should be done in full view of the time limits into which you are shut, and of the natural interest, or the reverse, in the subject, which may be expected to be found in your scholars. It will be wise at this point to run over in your mind the various persons that constitute your class, and to see what particular individuals among them you are going to reach in a helpful way through this lesson. Such a knowledge will aid in giving definiteness to your Aim, appropriateness to your Method, and effectiveness to your Application.

V. FIXING THE PIVOTAL POINTS OF THE STORY, OR OF THE OUTLINE OF THOUGHT, FIRMLY IN MIND with a clear view of the way in which the Transition from one point to another is to be made.

For your own comfort, and that you may be sure in advance of your pathway to the end, it will be well to fix mentally the main points in the order you intend to take them up, and to think out clearly the manner in which you will make the transition from one point to the next. You will save yourself the awkward sensation of unexpectedly stepping into mental vacancy, and the dilemma of not knowing how to get out on the main pathway again. If you should fall into such confusion, you probably will go stumbling around and beating the air with chance thoughts, in con-

stantly increasing embarrassment, and with the loss of some minutes of time.

Minds differ greatly, and some teachers can rely on their instinct for finding the way in any difficulty, even where clear perception of connection has failed them. But the man who knows the landmarks along the road, need give himself no worry during the journey. There are times when you will, while speaking, discover a short cut, or a better and more effective path, and there is nothing to bind you to the track you have blazed in advance, if you catch a new vision of the goal and strike out independently through the virgin forest. But as you are due at the terminus at a fixed moment, you will be more sure of yourself if there is a beaten path to fall back on, where it becomes necessary.

Some regions that you penetrate may be very picturesque and even intricate, and it may be possible not only to traverse them more rapidly by airship, but also to render the journey more understandable and attractive, and in many cases more thrilling and unforgettable.

Therefore at this point it will be well to decide whether you can and ought use

#### VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

There is only one rule here. If they do not suggest themselves, find them, or omit them. We cannot treat the subject, but refer you to what

has been said on it in Chapter XII on "How Shall I Illustrate the Lesson?" Your illustrations should be selected from the point of view of appreciation by the class.

All this time your material has been accumulating. You are ready to

#### VII. CUT DOWN YOUR WORK TO LESSON-PERIOD SIZE

You probably have enough ideas in your mind and enough things that you desire to do to fill a whole hour. You must compress your work into half that space, perhaps less. Look over your preparation, for thoughts and details that are irrelevant. Eliminate explanations and discussions that are too complicated or obscure to handle in short order. Put a time mark on all topics that are so tempting for discussion that they will involve you in undue length. Omit absolutely such things in your preparation as were valuable to yourself in getting to the heart of the matter and are fundamental to the technical student, but are beyond the range of concise and successful class treatment. If your mind is apt to become suggestive of new ideas and expands under the inspiration of teaching, cut down your materials to two-thirds of what you need to fill the period, so as to allow some room for extempore thought, and for possible discussion or questioning by scholars. If on the other hand, your mind contracts in the act of teaching, and you are obliged



to fall back on your preparation with the feeling that the fullness thereof has vanished and only a few dry roots remain, you can provide yourself more amply in advance.

Having devoted all this time to securing what may be called the intrinsic strength for your lesson, and to arranging and condensing it, it is now in order to consider how you will bring the lesson to an appealing and effective close. This final part of your task, which, with the faces of your scholars in mind, should be deeply interesting, and should appeal to your own heart, may perhaps be divided into two parts, viz.: Summing Up, and Making Application.

#### VIII. HOW BEST TO SUM UP

Turn back in your mind to what you found to be the fundamental thought. Recall what you announced at the beginning as your purpose and object. Recall the more important stages of development. Think also of the intention of the inspired writer in penning the passage, and then prepare mentally a few strong and glowing statements which will embody the substance of the lesson, and which will be pointed or headed toward the Application.

#### IX. SELECTING THE APPLICATIONS

With the various individuals of your class, and what they most need, or what will be most help-

ful to the class as a whole, or to certain individuals in it, in your mind, review all the applications that have occurred to you during your study, and select those which seemed to flow most naturally from the lesson, especially from its main thought, and which will be most telling.

It may be possible for you to present four or five different applications with success, but usually you will be doing better if you concentrate on two or three, or on a single one flowing from the main thought. In that case the other really good applications can perhaps be made in a cursory and incidental way, in a single sentence or two, dropped as it were, as a hint during your exposition of the substance of the lesson. If one or two of the applications should fail to strike a responsive chord, the third may strike the right spot and be effective. For the manner of making the application I cannot do better than refer you to what is said in Chapter XIV.

#### X. PLANNING THE PUPIL'S CO-OPERATIVE WORK

This includes the Memory Work, the Lesson Questions, the Topics or Points for discussion, and Memoranda for individual Research. These matters cannot be touched on here except to give a little advice on the use of Questions. The importance of the questioning method and the way to employ it has been treated in full in Chapters XV and XVI.

Perhaps you teach entirely by the question method. Even in such a case there will be places where in order to save time, or to keep things on the track, or to give the class the fundamental point of view, it will be wise to make positive statements and to give a little instruction in direct form.

It is essential, if you teach entirely through the use of questions, that you have your Outline well in mind all the time. If your questions follow the actual text of the lesson, clause for clause, you will need to bring out into prominence the proportionate importance of the greater facts and truths. The scholars should recognize the pathway of thought, and feel that they are making progress on it as the lesson proceeds. The pathway of thought may be that of the writer of the passage, or may be your own, which you have mapped out for the purpose of teaching certain great truths, or of meeting what you believe to be the greatest spiritual needs of the class at the moment.

When at the conclusion you come to the practical application, it will be wise, in order to avoid any awkward blunder or miscarriage of intention, brought on by a wrong reply of the pupils, to so bring the truth of the lesson to a positive focus, without actually stating it in so many words, that when the great question of application is asked the pupils cannot possibly fail both

to see it in its weightiness, and also to feel the answer rising in their hearts.

It may be wise, after you have brought out the first fact, or truth, or thought in the lesson through your questions, to briefly *sum up the result* of the class's work in positive form, and then proceed to the next, and so on to the end.

You may reserve your question work for the introduction and concluding part of the lesson. In all cases remember that your main points should be in the mind of the class as they advance. Otherwise the really important parts of the lesson may not be brought out, or may be submerged in incidental discussion.

It also is well to remember that if your question work is general, and really elicits response and hearty interest in the pupils, your progress will be slow, and you cannot think of covering the same amount of ground that you would by direct statement. Time will be lost in giving the pupils opportunity to think. Time will be lost in sidetracking irrelevant questions, in showing the bearing of questions and the kinship of several questions arising in different minds. Finally, time will be lost in bringing the results of the questioning into line with your main pathway of progress. Hence, in order to reach the terminus at the proper moment, you must be constantly alert as to the things that can be skipped over without interfering with efficiency.

I conclude with two general observations. The first is this: If you use the questioning process successfully, the pupils will be teaching themselves the lesson in their own way under your direction, and although they accomplish much less, what has been done will be of much more value to them. They will be more likely to become active doers of the work, and not to remain in the passive or receptive state of a mere hearer.

The second observation is a word of caution. When you employ the questioning method be fair in dealing with answers, and be sure to accord due respect to the answers given by all the participants. Some of the things that the more obtuse scholars will offer, and some of the very clever answers made by the brighter scholars will be very light in your judgment and may even be laughable. The stumbling and hesitating of a scholar may be positively painful to the class. In other cases scholars may decline to participate, with perhaps the unintentional result of throwing a wet blanket over the whole exercise. At times the questions will tend to disturb the poise of your judgment, and may even confuse you, and very often answers may be given that will try your patience. But in all cases be uniformly courteous and respectful to your scholars; deal with them as you yourself would like to be dealt with; and in your bearing and manner, even

where the answer is worthless, give them that quiet assurance of encouragement that will cause them to feel that their effort has been accepted as genuine and with good will, and that you have appreciated their willingness, and are not irritated by any lack of value in their contribution. On the other hand, if you have pestiferous and persistent minds in your class, inclined to split hairs, or to monopolize the valuable time of the class on minor discussions, you must nerve yourself to deal firmly and kindly with them, and by a superior intellectual sagacity, or with a winning personal way, close the door tight against too frequent interruption.

We have completed our explanation of the things that the teacher is to have in mind in the preparation of the lesson, viz.: Getting the Material and the Method, the Aim, the Pivotal Points, the Illustrations, his process of Elimination and Compression, his Summing Up of the lesson and its Application. He also should be ready with his plan for the pupil's Co-operative Work. We go now to the teacher's activity during the lesson period itself.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THINGS TO DO IN THE ACT OF TEACHING THE LESSON

#### I. OPENING THE LESSON PERIOD

THREE points are mentioned here in the Outline, as suggestive, none of which need any further illustration, and we proceed to the next function.

#### II. INTRODUCING THE LESSON

The Outline here is explicit and clear. The object of the introduction is to gain the attention and interest of the scholar and to put him quickly into living touch with the work before him. The introduction may be greatly varied, for the sake of freshness, to accord with time and occasion. Whatever is of great local interest in the community or the congregation, and can be turned to service as a stepping stone to lead into the lesson, may be of service here. The two great points to remember are to get fresh and living contact with the thinking of the class on that particular day, and in a few words to place the substance of the lesson before them.

We come, at last, to the main work.

#### III. TEACHING THE LESSON

Here the two great preparatory parts of your

work are to be combined, viz.: the Material as you have gathered and organized it in your Preparation, and the Method or Combination of methods that you have chosen in order to present it. The actual teaching of the lesson will show you, far better than any advice, in how far your Preparation has been of value, and in how far your Method is the best one for your use. Do not be discouraged if you feel that you have failed on either of these points. With experience, confidence will grow and effectiveness will increase.

The Summing Up of the lesson just prior to its close is the tying of a binder around the sheaf of wheat which you have harvested during the hour, and is well worth the minute or two that the act requires. The Application is the actual handing out of the loaf of bread, made from the harvest, to hungry souls. However rich and varied the harvest be that you have cut, if you do not bind it into unity at the close, and if, further, you have no real bread to offer for the spiritual development of your scholars, your work will have been only half done.

#### IV. CLOSING THE LESSON PERIOD

There should be a few seconds' pause after you have concluded the Application, and you should be able to get down from the impressiveness of the climax to the natural and matter-of-fact re-



marks that are to lead the class to think in a business way of next Sunday's lesson. The object of these closing remarks is to continue your hold on the class for what is still to come. You want them present next Sunday. You want them to come with expectation. If possible, you desire some preparation on their part. You also do not want to lose the momentum which you have gained up to this point by their Sunday after Sunday attendance and participation in the lesson. Whatever will be suitable for these purposes, will be in place here. But do not exhort them, and above all, do not elaborate the closing words into a sort of second sermon. Be brief and businesslike.

#### CONCLUDING ADVICE

A teacher of long experience, Mr. Amos H. Wells, looking back on his career, tells us that if he had his work to do over again, he would think less of himself, more of his pupils, and very much more of Christ. He says:

"I should not worry about the impression I was making, but I should seek to have Him make an impression upon my pupils, though through my failure. I should not try to shine, but I should try to make Christ's life shine out. I should not seek to be popular, but to make Him so. Probably I should find this the very

best way to obtain popularity for myself; but if I did not obtain it, but did gain my main end, I should not care.

“Then, if I could begin again, I should make less elaborate preparation for my teaching. I should learn to simplify my teaching, and to focus it more upon a few facts and truths. As I remember it, I used to put enough into each half hour for two full hours. The result must have been to confuse my pupils and fill them with dismay. I should have remembered that they were at the beginning, or near the beginning, of their Bible study. I should have put myself in their place. I should have insisted upon first things first, and then, after the first things were mastered, and not till then, I should have gone on to the second things. I should have made haste slowly, and I am sure that I would have arrived much sooner at the goal.

“If I had it to do over again, I should think less of what I was giving and more of what they were getting. I did little or nothing, at the start, to make my pupils study at home. I gave out no home work. My teaching was all lectures, though usually under the thin disguise of questions and answers. Thus I was all the time pouring into baskets full of holes. Their home study, though probably it would have been very inadequate, yet would have provided a solid cup of attention into which I might have poured some-

thing that they would have retained. This was a very bad mistake of mine.

"I should have discovered this mistake if I had tested my work, but I did not do this. I did not really 'examine' them in any way. Now, I give examinations, written examinations, almost every Sunday; and the process, invaluable as it is, takes only five minutes. If I had examined my pupils in those early days, what surprises I should have gained, for them and for me! Every teacher should know, and cause his pupils to know, whether they are actually making progress in Bible knowledge or not; but I used to 'teach' straight along in blissful ignorance that I was not really teaching anything—or very little at the most.

"When I began to teach I did not make the great mistake of not having a deep personal interest in my pupils, and I think that I had a personal interest over them; but I did not visit them at their homes, or have them visit me at my home, or write to them, or get up little parties for them, or take them to lectures, or go out walking with them, or do anything else of the kind; I just talked to them on Sundays. If I had those pupils now, I should do all of those things, and I should get far deeper into their lives, that I might know better just how and where to help them. Once, after teaching a certain young man for several years, thinking all the time that he was a firm be-

liever in Christianity, I discovered to my dismay that he was a very thorough agnostic. I should not make that mistake now.

“The reason why I made that mistake was because I did not try to bring my pupils into a definite Christian life. I did not emphasize the necessity of a Christian confession, or, if I did, it was all general emphasis, not brought to a head by definite tests, what the evangelists call ‘drawing the net.’ I did not approach their parents in regard to the matter. I did not have conversations with my pupils, one at a time, about their joining the church. I do all this now, and count it the crown of my Sunday-School work. At the beginning of every lesson during the studies made through 1910 in the life of Christ I asked my class, ‘Why are we studying Matthew this year?’ And the class answered in concert, ‘To know Jesus Christ better.’ That is the use of it all.”

Thus Mr. Wells brings us back to our starting point in the first chapter. To teach in Sunday-School is to help the scholars to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The teacher is a builder of life. His scholars are living and growing stones (I Peter 2:2-5); fitly framed together, on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20-22), into the living Church of God, unto a holy temple to the Lord.

## I. THE ART

1. Nature
2. Origin
3. Craftsmen
4. Aim
5. Realization
6. Process
7. Types
8. The Master-Teacher

## **II. METHOD**

- 1. Psychological Problem**
- 2. Methodological Problem**
- 3. Literary Problem**
- 4. Practical Problem**
- 5. Problem of Examination and Test**
- 6. Collateral Problems**

**Influence**

**Training**

### III. THE MATERIAL

#### 1. Truth

The Message

#### 2. Kind

The Form

#### 3. Delimitation

Fitting Quantity to  
Practicability

## **IV. THE ACT**

- 1. Preparation**
- 2. Presentation**
- 3. Association or  
Illustration**
- 4. Generalization**
- 5. Application**



## NOTE

A full bibliography on the various subjects of Christian Education, including ,

Babyhood

Early Childhood

Childhood

Kindergarten

Child and Religion

Child Training

The Boy

The Organized Boy

The Girl

Adolescence

Psychology of Youth

Psychology and Religious Education

Public Schools and Religious Education

Church and Religious Education

Ideals of Education

Psychology and the Teacher

Psychology and the Pupil

Pedagogy

Telling a Story

Sunday-School Teaching

Teacher Training

Graded Sunday-School Lessons

The Sunday-School

will be issued shortly in separate form. It was prepared to accompany this volume, but owing to difficulties in the printing situation, its inclusion would too greatly have delayed the present issue.

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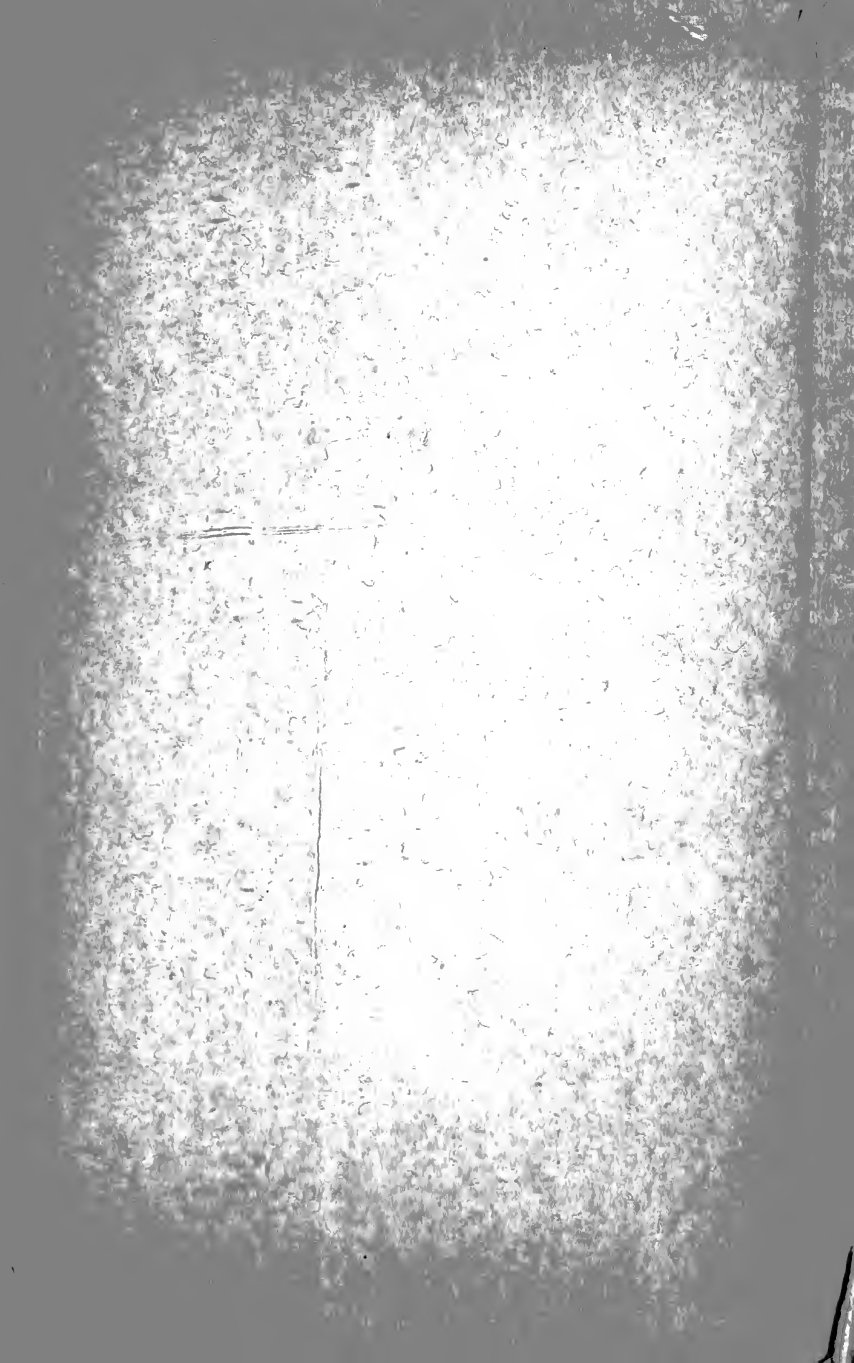




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