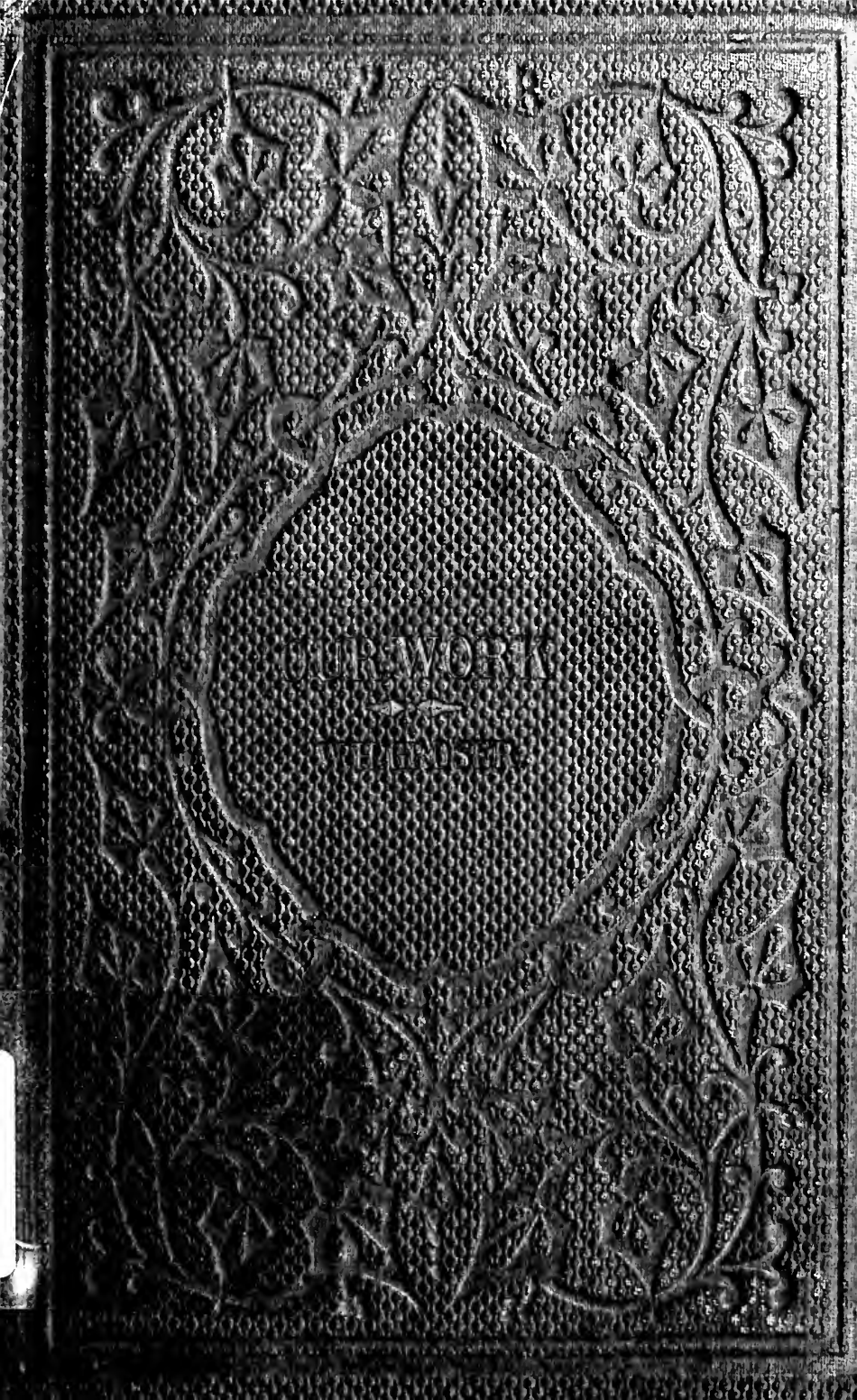
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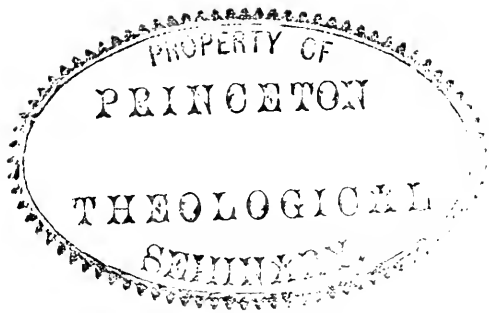

OUR WORK:

Four Lectures

ON THE

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHING,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MEMBERS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION TRAINING CLASS.

BY WILLIAM H. GROSER, B.Sc., (LOND.), F.G.S.,

OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION COMMITTEE.

Author of "Illustrative Teaching," "Bible Months," "The Introductory Class," &c.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE design of the Author, in preparing these Lectures, has been to exhibit some of the leading principles upon which all Education, to be successful, must be based, and to point out their application to Sunday school instruction. He has endeavoured to be both accurate and popular; and, although at the cost of limiting the scope of the Lectures, has entered into details, and illustrated rules by examples, in the hope that the work may thereby be rendered more useful to young and inexperienced teachers.

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OUR MATERIAL;

OR,

WHAT IS A CHILD?

By WILLIAM H. GROSER, B.Sc., F.G.S.,

OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION COMMITTEE.

OUR MATERIAL.

It was my privilege, not long since, to visit an extensive manufactory of the finest kind of porcelain, in one of our midland cities. I was first shown the crude materials; I saw them kneaded together in great circular cisterns as if by an unseen power, and then passed into the room where the potters pursued their craft. I watched "the potter work a work upon the wheels;" and as the white, moist clay grew beneath his skilful hand into forms of grace and beauty, I thought I had never yet seen so exquisite a type of perfect plasticity. I could now appreciate the cogent question of the apostle, "Hath not the potter power over the clay?"

I had visited the city simply as a Sunday school teacher, and here was indeed a striking emblem of my work. Each child, I thought, that God places beneath my care has a nature plastic and impressible as yonder clay, and, whether I will it or not, will bear the impress of my moulding hand, whether skilful or unsteady, whether put forth in earnest wisdom or in vague uncertainty. Yonder vessels have different purposes to serve,—some to honour, and some to dishonour, according as the potter shall determine; but

this for a few years, or at most a few centuries. And the vessels which I am called to fashion, they too have their destinies; but their honour or their dishonour shall be unchanging and eternal. God grant that, like some of these material things, they may at length be deemed fit for a royal Master's use!

But earth yields no product that can truly typify the beauty of *our* Material—a living soul; least of all, the soul of a young child. Child-life is perhaps the fairest picture upon which the eye of man can rest; the only picture in the world's vast gallery which he forbears to criticize. For childhood, the satirist has in his quiver no arrows, and in its presence the cynic forgets to sneer, and the misanthrope to scowl. As the ancients ever looked wistfully back on a golden age long passed away, so the adult delights to gaze on the bright visions of his early days, and sighs that they can return no more. In the society of childhood, manhood forgets its cares, and age its decrepitude. The painter strives to perpetuate its joyous scenes, and the poet to recall its sunny memories; while the humorist, as he strives to contemplate it with a mirthful smile, lets fall his pen, and drops a tear instead. Happy child!

"Ah! who, when fading of itself away,
Would cloud the sunshine of his little day?
Now is the May of life; careering round,
Joy wings his feet, joy lifts him from the ground!
Pointing to such, well might Cornelia say,
When the rich casket shone in bright array,

'These are MY jewels.' Well of such as he
When Jesus spake, well might His language be,
'Suffer these little ones to come to Me.'"

But in mind, as in matter, beauty and mystery are often linked together; where Beauty smiles, Mystery, her companion, stands veiled at her side.

Child-nature, which wins us by its grace, confounds us by the problems which it offers to our consideration. The experiences of that young mind and heart, could they be uttered, would resolve many a doubt, and clear up many a difficulty. Most truly has Dr. Reid remarked, "that if we could obtain a distinct and full history of all that hath passed in the mind of a child from the beginning of life and sensation, till it grows up to the use of reason, . . . this would probably give more light into the human faculties than all the systems of philosophers about them since the beginning of the world."*

But such a complete juvenile autobiography is as far beyond our reach as the sibylline books which King Tarquin declined to purchase, or the lost volumes of Titus Livius. Yet we may make some approach towards the desired result, even though, like the line which geometers describe, we can never reach the point towards which we tend; and this in two ways:—(1) the elder child—the youth—the man, can, by the exercise of memory, recall many of his early thoughts and feelings, and record them for the benefit of others; and (2) as the physiologist

* "Philosophy of the Mind," i., § 2.

detects internal action by external symptoms, so the student of mind may detect its unseen workings by the outward acts to which they give rise. From these two sources, memory and observation, all our knowledge of child-nature is derived. Of the extent to which these sources may be resorted to, I may refer you to the writings of Thomas De Quincey and Charlotte Brontë, as illustrations of the power of recollection; and to those of Jacob Abbott, and the venerable James Gall, of Edinburgh, as examples of accurate observation of juvenile life and character.

The value and essential importance of such knowledge of child-nature to the teacher, secular or religious, would seem too obvious to admit of formal proof. If the potter must understand the nature and properties of the clay which he fashions, if the agriculturist must be acquainted with soils, and the miner with rocks, the goldsmith with precious metals, and the textile manufacturer with vegetable fibres, surely he who has to mould and fashion living, immortal *mind*, needs to know at least what can be known of the nature of that material, and the laws to which it is subject.

It may be an assistance to the memory, and serve as a series of landmarks in the inquiries which we are to pursue together, if we keep in view the four items of knowledge which the "thoroughly furnished" artist, whether he work upon matter or mind, ought to possess.

1st. As we have just said, a KNOWLEDGE OF THE MATERIAL TO BE EMPLOYED.

2nd. A CLEAR VIEW OF THE RESULT TO BE ATTAINED.

3rd. A THOROUGH ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE INSTRUMENTS TO BE USED.

4th. A KNOWLEDGE OF THE METHODS OF HANDLING THE INSTRUMENTS SO AS TO BRING ABOUT THE DESIRED RESULT.

These propositions are self-evident; yet one or more of them are not unfrequently lost sight of by workers of all classes and denominations, and some have been practically denied in the great work of teaching the young. Take, for example, the *first-named* requisite (with which we are to be chiefly concerned in the present lecture). I presume that there is hardly any one who would seriously dispute the assertion that a teacher of children should understand child-nature. And yet does not the whole history of education, from the earliest period of which we have any record, down almost to the present time, read like a satire upon that very principle?

Consider the social position as well as the mental and moral qualifications of a schoolmaster of the olden time in our own country, and then ask yourselves, Was ever a sublime office so degraded and despised in the persons and characters of those who filled it? "Would not," asked Dugald Stewart, within the present century, and seeming to speak of a millennium yet far distant—"would not education be necessarily rendered more systematical and enlightened, if the powers and faculties on which it operates were more scientifically examined and better

understood?" Many of the teachers of his day would scarcely know the meaning of the words he used, or indeed of *any* words, save such as ministered to the wants of mere animal life. And even now such knowledge is, we fear, in some quarters very homœopathic indeed in its amount. But to return.

It is an anomaly not easy to explain, that the sciences which of all others concern us most intimately are the very subjects which, to persons in general, seem pre-eminently unwelcome and unattractive. I refer to physiology, metaphysics, ethics, and theology; in other words, the laws and principles which relate respectively to our bodies, our minds, our hearts, and our souls. They have to do with our own precious, loved, invaluable, inestimable, and never-to-be-sufficiently-appreciated selves; and yet what is the popular view of these sciences? Physiology is "horrid;" metaphysics, "dreadfully dry;" ethics, "a bore;" and theology, "a thing for parsons and professors." And even among those classes of society from whom different sentiments might have been expected, theology is loudly denounced as a thing of mere creeds,—as though a man's creed were not the foundation of his daily life, but rather some hideous excrescence grafted on his moral nature; while mental and moral philosophy, technically termed metaphysics and ethics, are quoted as the extreme of dry and barren speculation. The advertising pages of the *Athenæum*, a few months back, announced the publication of a small work, the avowed object of

which is to show that the science of mind is simply "a nullity,"—which sage discovery is set forth in "six dialogues." And I suppose that the mention of metaphysics in almost every social circle will be found to excite a feeling, if not an expression, of antipathy on the part of at least a majority of the persons present.

I will not stay to speculate on the cause of this remarkable prejudice further than to record the conviction that, although many influences may have combined to foster and encourage it, its true root is to be found in that hereditary tendency to evil, of which some half-fledged philosophers are so eager to chirp out an indignant denial, but whose tendency uniformly is to subordinate the spiritual to the sensual, the unseen to the seen, the future to the present, the things that concern man as a rational and accountable being to the things that minister to his lower appetites and necessities; and whose gospel may be summed up in the one doctrine, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." I would merely urge that we, as trainers of character, should earnestly strive to rise superior to vulgar errors, to popular fallacies, and even to the prejudices which we ourselves may insensibly have contracted; and therefore I venture to invite your careful consideration of a few of the elementary truths of mental and moral science. And let me add that the "dryness" of any department of knowledge is not real, but apparent. Truth and mind are related to each other as light and the eye; and whenever they seem to be discordant, it is because we are viewing

them through a distorting medium. The remedy is easy,—not to "linger shivering on the brink" of the science, but to plunge boldly in. Then we shall soon discover that truth, under whatever name, is the same thing still. We may not feel that we care about the laws of association, or the classification of the feelings; but let us take the advice of Sydney Smith, whose "Sketches of Moral Philosophy" can hardly fail to please the most fastidious; let us "make ourselves care, get up, shake ourselves well, *pretend* to care, make believe to care, and very soon we *shall* care, and care so much that we shall be continually pondering these very themes, and get extremely angry with any one who interrupts us in our pursuits, and tolerate no other conversation, and catch ourselves plaguing everybody to death who approaches us, with the discussion of these subjects." And now for a brief glance at elementary metaphysics.

One of the first things we learned about ourselves was that we had five senses—seeing, hearing, smelling, touch, and tasting; and although repeatedly cautioned by nervous people not to frighten them out of the possession of *seven*, we have resolutely restricted our credence to the orthodox number, and regarded the remaining two as mere myths, like good King Arth and the wise men of Gotham.

The wise men of later days have, however, detected (at least they think so) three additional senses or kinds of sensation, raising the total to eight; so that the loss of seven, as above referred to, would not leave the bereaved subject entirely senseless.

Even before "muscular Christianity" came into fashion, it was pointed out by Hartley that the muscles or flesh are as much the seat of sensations as the eye or the ear; and these not identical with the sense of touch. The sensations themselves are not easily described, but the states of feeling which immediately result from them are familiar enough. The feeling of fatigue at the close of a hard day's work, when we throw ourselves on the sofa and vow that "our very bones ache," is one of the least agreeable effects of muscular sensation. On the other hand, the intense delight which kittens, puppies, and children appear to derive from purely active exercise, without any reference to its results, appears to arise in part from the same kind of sensation.

The above, then, forms the sixth sense. Senses seven and eight are termed by Mr. Mill *sensations of disorganization*, like those experienced when any part of the body is bruised, burnt, cut, or inflamed—the peculiar "pulsation" in a whitlow, for instance; and *sensations in the alimentary canal*, such as are felt by schoolboys at Christmas, or by dyspeptics all the year round.

But these new senses have not had their individual claims unhesitatingly admitted. Professor Bain considers that the muscular sense should be placed in a family by itself, and the other two classed together with certain others as *sensations of organic life*. He thus reduces the true senses to six, beside the muscular sense.

These senses are among the chief links which unite

body to *mind*—our material to our immaterial selves; and they have been beautifully designated by Dr. Wilson the "gateways of knowledge." They are the inlets through which the world without communicates with the world within; the isthmuses which unite the continent of matter with the continent of mind. And while speaking of these connecting links I should be sorry to incur the imputation of ignoring, as too often is the case with teachers, both religious and secular, the important fact that the child has a physical as well as a mental organization. We have to deal with young and tender bodies, and not merely with opening minds and susceptible hearts. The Sunday school teacher will therefore do well to bear in mind a few simple principles.

While the chief aim of the Christian educator is to train the moral and intellectual powers of the pupil, he should seek, as far as in him lies, to promote the welfare of the body, remembering how intimate is the connection of physical health with mental vigour and moral rectitude. The child, like the growing plant, needs abundance of light, warmth, and air, for its free development. Hence schoolrooms should be well lighted, warmed, and ventilated; and the absence of these qualities in our Sunday school buildings is a fault which cannot be too deeply deplored, nor, so far as they arise from parsimony or neglect, too severely condemned. Yet, as such matters rest more especially with school committees and school officers, it does not fall within the scope of the present lecture to enlarge upon them more in detail, or to dwell upon such

educational anomalies as high forms and uncomfortable seats, however common they may be. There is one fault in class management, however, which I may take leave to advert to particularly. The bodies, like the minds of young children, are incapable of long-continued effort, especially in one particular direction. Hence brevity and variety should be studied by the teacher. The entire exercise should not be too long as a whole, and relief should be afforded to the children by frequent changes of posture. This principle is admirably carried out in some of our infant schools, and no one can have failed to observe with what marked pleasure and benefit to the little pupils.

But to return to the subject of sensation. All that we learn is acquired in the first instance through the medium of the senses, of which we shall come to speak more particularly anon. Meanwhile let us enter by one of these gateways, and gaze upon the world of mind to which they introduce us.

The scene is new, yet not new; strange, yet familiar. For a while all seems dim and confused, but presently we begin to distinguish three peculiar forms. Here is the dignified INTELLECT, or THOUGHT, itself often called "Mind;" the more excitable EMOTION, or FEELING; and our old and pertinacious friend, THE WILL. In plain language, THINKING, FEELING, and WILLING, are the properties of mind—of those minds with which we have to deal in our work as educators of the young. We must glance at each of these, and then concern ourselves with

the special thoughts and feelings which characterize the young.

It is recorded of the celebrated traveller and critic, Niebuhr, that in his old age, although blind and almost helpless, he could describe with wonderful minuteness and vivacity the scenes he had witnessed in the course of his travels. He told his friends that "as he lay in bed, all visible objects shut out, the pictures of what he had seen in the East continually floated before his mind's eye."

If any of us were asked to explain the above phenomenon, we should probably reply, "Oh, he was evidently a man of lively imagination." But what did he *see?* "Why, merely his own ideas, his own conceptions,—the same as when we dream." But how did he come to have ideas of Oriental scenes? "Because he had witnessed them previously, of course."

This being granted, we have in the above incident a simple illustration of Sensation, and of the three properties of mind; *e. g.*,—

The traveller had gazed upon the vivid scenes of the glowing East; here was SENSATION.

Lying in bed with his eyes closed, he could recall the impression, and conceive of the object; here was INTELLECT, exercising the powers of *memory*, *conception*, and *imagination*.

The phenomenon struck him as curious; here was EMOTION—the emotion of *wonder*.

He resolved to communicate the fact to his friends; here was an act of the WILL.

But some teacher may ask, "Are all sensations thus permanent? Is the mind ordinarily able thus to retain them, and make them a part of its stores of knowledge? I only wish I could think so concerning the sensations which I produce from Sunday to Sunday upon my scholars' organs of hearing! For my part, I fear that the large majority of such sensations are fleeting as the clouds,—

> 'And, like an unsubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a wrack behind.'"

This is but too truly the case with many of those sensations which reach the child's ear through the exercise of the teacher's voice. Yet there needs be no mystery as to the cause of their evanescence. In order that a sensation may become part of our knowledge, "one thing is needful;"—what is that one thing?

Look at that helpless infant of a few weeks old. It holds in its tiny palm a piece of red coral, set round with small tinkling cymbals, which give forth a somewhat monotonous sound at every movement of baby's arm. The instrument of music evidently has its uses; as a whole, it acts as an anodyne in paroxysms of squalling; while the animal portion serves as a smooth though innutritious object of resistance, upon which the infant may exercise its gums. One would think that something might be learnt even from so simple an object as a coral; but gaze into those two circular eyes, mark that vacant stare, and you will be satisfied that baby has no idea of anything of the sort. He feels, and hears, and

sees, and derives a sort of pleasure from those sensations, and that is all. But look at that same baby when a few months have rolled away; observe how differently he seizes the coral,—touches, shakes, listens to, and tastes the toy; and mark the gleam of intelligence which beams from the eyes when he is thus engaged: he has converted the toy into a lesson-book for his own use. What has made the difference, and in what does it consist? Plainly, in the former case there was mere *Sensation*. In the latter, sensation was accompanied by *Attention*, and the sensations produced were *connected* by the mind with the object which produced them. This is called *Perception*, and without it there can be no knowledge acquired. And thus it happens that in a large class of children, or a large congregation of adults, though all may hear what is said with equal distinctness, only a few may perceive what is going on, simply through lack of that *attention* which would convert *sensation* into *perception*.

The vast importance of this act or state of the mind, which we call *attention*, must be my apology for dwelling upon it for a minute or two in its relations to our work. It is often said that children have very little power of attention, and in a certain sense this is true. But watch a juvenile group around Punch and Judy, and mark their countenances as they trace each successive phase of that exciting domestic drama from its commencement to its close. I think we shall be obliged to admit that under *some* circumstances children are capable of vigorous and long-sustained

attention. Nor can we find a better illustration of mental absorption than the schoolboy engaged in a match of cricket or football.

The facts seem to be these:—1. The *attention* of children is not much under the control of the *will*, but depends upon the *interest* which they feel in the subject. From this it follows that, as a rule, the attention of our younger scholars is not to be secured by begging, or scolding, or reasoning, or expostulation, but by presenting that which will *interest* them. Other methods may enforce quietude, but nothing else will gain attention.

2. A child's attention cannot long be kept up by *one object*. The rattle or drum is soon exhausted of its interest, and cast aside, to the unreasonable annoyance of the donors. The box of bricks or the doll's house affords much longer enjoyment; while Punch or cricket is "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." Hence we must beware of monotony in our instructions. "Here a little, and there a little," must be our motto; and the "little" *here* must be as different as possible from the "little" *there*. And the younger the children, and the feebler their power of sustaining the attention, the greater the variety of subject and manner required in teaching them.

It has, perhaps, struck you that there is often a vast difference between the attention of a child and that of an adult. If you wish your young scholars to attend, you desire that their eyes and ears shall be open; but when you are especially anxious to give fixed attention to a subject yourself, you shut your

eyes, cover your face with your hands, as if in the depths of despair, or stare vacantly down at the pavement, or out at the window, as the case may be. And in proportion as you succeed in fixing the attention, you cease to have any perceptions of external things. It is said of Sir Isaac Newton, that sometimes, while dressing himself in the morning, he would suddenly enter upon a train of thought, and, becoming absorbed in meditation, sit for hours upon the bed with one stocking on and the other in his hand, entirely lost to all that was passing around him, or to his own remarkable appearance. These illustrations may serve to remind us that in early years the attention is chiefly occupied with *sensible objects*. The infant or young child learns by *perception*, through the medium of its senses.

Hence the first of the three stages of a child's intellectual history is appropriately termed THE AGE OF PERCEPTION. The younger pupils in our infant classes are passing through this period of development. But when they enter our schools they have for some time been pupils in Dame Nature's academy, and have already made such progress by the help of the six senses, that the most skilful of human instructors can but follow at a distance her wondrously attractive methods and her inimitable success. Yet only in proportion as we make Nature our model—in other words, conform our modes of tuition to the laws to which the God of Nature has subjected the human mind—can we render our schools as influential and as

attractive as that school which precedes and outvies all that man has ever invented.

At the Age of Perception, the child is occupied with the *material* and with the *present;* the vague and imaginary has as yet little or no charm for him. His castle-building is a reality, a piling up of wooden blocks, and not a dreamy visioning of possibilities to come. We repeat, his acquisitions are confined to outward objects. Of these he acquires a knowledge *directly* through the senses, or *indirectly* by verbal description, through the analogy of known objects: *and in no other way* than these. An illustration from actual teaching will explain our meaning:—

Suppose that I wish to convey to an infant class the idea of a fig tree—an object which they have never seen. I might take them to a garden and show them a fig tree, or I might exhibit a model or picture; this would be teaching them *directly* through the medium of the senses. In default of such helps, I should be driven to verbal description, trying to convey an idea of a fig tree *indirectly*, through the analogy of some other trees which the pupils were familiar with.

Now, I need not point out which of these two methods would more fully accomplish the desired end. But if it be admitted, as I think it must, that the former plan would be far preferable to the latter, I do not see how the advantages of visible objects, as aids in infant tuition, can be denied. Apart from the pleasure accruing to the pupils from the exercise of a second sense—and that sense the most important of all—a large increase of clearness of apprehension

must be the result of such perceptive teaching. And in proportion to the vividness of the perceptions will be the ease with which such perceptions can be afterwards recalled.

This last remark conducts us to the next step in our inquiry.

The blind traveller who so vividly recalled the scenes which he had witnessed years before, did so, we saw, by the exercise of the power of *conception*. Conception is therefore the faculty by which past perceptions are recalled, and absent objects seen with "the mind's eye" as they formerly were seen with the bodily eye; or heard with the inner ear as once they were with the outward ear.

By conception, the sailor hears, resounding over the sea, the sounds of village bells; the painter reproduces the objects or scenes he has witnessed; and the lonely exile beholds in waking dreams his loved and distant home. When the German artist executed, in the absence of the original copy, a perfect *facsimile* of one of Rubens' masterpieces, he exhibited very powerful conception; andwhen Rousseau, lying in his boat on the Lake of Vienne, abandoned himself, hour after hour, to bright and airy vision, he exercised the same faculty. "But," some one may say, "was not the painter exercising *memory*, and the philosopher *imagination?*" Undoubtedly; for conception is the remembrance of a *perception*, and imagination is the grouping of our conceptions together.

Now the age of perception in the child is followed by a period in which this power of conception develops itself in a very marked manner. The intellect takes a firmer grasp of the unseen; it lives less exclusively in the present and material. I have observed this change taking place in my own children, by watching the character of their pastimes. It is now almost entirely dramatic. Everything is "pretend" and "make believe." Past events and distant scenes are recalled, and absent friends and playmates personified by the power of *conception*, while *imagination* groups the conceptions together in endless variety. This is matter of common observation, and serves to show, not only how vigorous these powers become even in young children, but also how large an amount of pleasure is derived from their exercise. We now understand what is meant by the second period of a child's intellectual history—the AGE OF CONCEPTION or IMAGINATION, at which our elementary Sunday scholars have arrived.

It might be an interesting and instructive occupation to inquire what it is which gives rise to particular conceptions; why, for example, the image of a particular acquaintance or long-forgotten landscape suddenly presents itself to the mind, rather than any other image. Doubtless, much depends upon past habits of thought and mode of life; but this question does not fall within the scope of the present lecture. The manner, however, in which one conception suggests another, and this a third, and so on through long trains of thought, is a subject, not

merely of lively interest, but strictly germane to our immediate purpose. An incident or two will throw light upon this phenomenon. A short time since I found myself looking in, as I passed, at an oilman's window. Among other things my eye casually rested on a bottle of pickles. The next moment the image of Professor Faraday rose before my mental eye. "What possible connection," you exclaim, "could there be between a bottle of pickles and that eminent philosopher?" Ordinarily none; but in my mind, on that particular occasion, a very close connection. The pickle-jar suggested similarly shaped bottles, which I had unsuccessfully tried to convert, in my schoolboy days, into cylinders for electrifying machines; this called up the form and countenance of our greatest electrician, Professor Faraday.

Now this principle, by which one idea calls up or suggests another, is termed ASSOCIATION or SUGGESTION. It is of wide application and vast importance. It has to do not merely with our thoughts, but also with our feelings and our actions, lying at the root of external perception, memory, habit, and all our acquired powers.

Of its influence upon memory we have just given an illustration. The following is much more striking:— "When I was about fifteen years of age," says the late Sir B. Brodie, "I went, with my father and mother and other friends, on a tour through Somersetshire; and having arrived at Wellington, where I had certainly never been before, we tarried an hour or two

at the "Squirrel" inn for refreshments. On entering the room where the rest of the party were assembled, I found myself suddenly surprised and pursued by a pack of strange, shadowy, infantile images, too vague to be called recollections, too distinct and persevering to be dismissed as phantasms. Whichever way I turned my eyes, faint and imperfect pictures of persons once familiar to my childhood, and feeble outlines of events long passed away, came crowding around me and vanishing again in rapid and fitful succession. A wild reverie of early childhood, half illusion, half reality, seized me, for which I could not possibly account; and when I attempted to fix and examine any one of the images, it fled like a phantom from my grasp, and was immediately succeeded by another equally confused and volatile. I felt assured that all this was not a mere trick of the imagination. It seemed to me rather that enfeebled memory was, by some sudden impulse, set actively at work, endeavouring to recall the forms of past realities, long overlaid and almost lost behind the throng of subsequent events. My uneasiness was noticed by my mother; and when I had described my sensations, the whole mystery was speedily solved by the discovery that the pattern of the wall-paper in the room where we were seated was exactly similar to that of my nursery at Paddington, which I had never seen since I was between four and five years of age. I did not immediately remember the paper, but I was soon satisfied that it was indeed the medium of association through which all those ill-

defined, half-faded forms had travelled up to light; my nurse and nursery events associated with that paper pattern being, after all, but very faintly pictured on the field of my remembrance."

The authoress of a recent work on "Prison Life" gives a touching instance of the influence of association upon the emotions:—"I have a remembrance of looking through the 'inspection' of a cell some years ago, and perceiving a prisoner, with her elbows on the table, staring at a common daisy, which she had plucked from the central patch of grass during her rounds,—one of those rude, repulsive, yet not wholly bad prisoners, from whom no display of sentiment was anticipated. Yet the wistful look of that woman at her stolen prize was a gleam of as true sentiment as ever breathed in the poet's lines. A painter might have made much of her position, and a philosopher might have moralized concerning it, for the woman wept at last, dropped her head down on the table between her linked hands, and shed her bitter tears silently and noiselessly. The prison daisy must have spoken of the old, innocent times—of the fields she crossed once with old friends—perhaps of daisies, like unto that before her, growing on a mother's grave."

Such examples of the law of association read a solemn lesson to religious teachers of the young. If casual impressions have such a power of awakening conceptions of past scenes and circumstances, associated with them in time or place, how important is it that the Sunday school and all its hallowed

exercises should be brought to the scholar's mind by links and ties of association of every kind! As soon as the child has entered upon the *conceptive* stage of his development, so soon may we avail ourselves of the law of mental association. In order to do this we must be *illustrative* teachers, associating Scripture truths with the every-day life of the scholar; like our divine Model, who pressed into His service bud and flower, sea and sky, sower and reaper; so that they who gazed upon these familiar things must perforce recall the gracious truths which He had linked with them.

Nor need I point out the supreme importance of connecting the sacred Day, the house of prayer, the Word of truth, the school and class, with every holy thought and every glad and joyous feeling; never with unintelligible performances, jaded and weary minds, dreary sermonizing, or harsh discipline.

Abbott gives a lively instance of the power of pleasant associations to influence a child's convictions and habits. He says, "On the question of a name for an infant brother, a little boy persisted in a preference for George over Francis, the name decided upon. "I said to him, 'If his name is Francis, you can, by-and-bye, when he grows up, say, "Mother, may I take Francis out to ride?" And mother will say, "Yes." Then you can take Francis up, and carry him out, and put him in your little waggon, and take hold of the handle, and then say, "Francis, are you all ready?" And Francis will say, "Yes." Then you can draw him about a little way, and after a little

while bring him back, and say, "Here, mother, I have brought Francis back safe." Do you not think, then, that his name had better be Francis?' 'Yes, I do,' said he, cordially, convinced and converted completely by this precious specimen of logic."

And, further, we are taught that, if the conceptions in a child's mind follow each other by virtue of association, and not independently of each other, our teachings, if they are to be remembered, should as far as possible be linked together by natural ties. I repeat, not merely that we should link Scripture truths with familiar objects and events, but also that each lesson should be connected, if practicable, with that which has gone before. As a Quarterly reviewer has remarked, filling a child's mind should be like packing a trunk;—the things that follow should fit in with those which have gone before, not be thrown in, in a heterogeneous mass. Hence, Bible lessons should be systematically arranged, and related to each other chronologically or in some other way.

And, once more, could we examine in detail a child's conceptions, and the groupings of its imagination, we should notice one remarkable peculiarity,—they are made up of well-known objects. The parts of the mental picture are all distinct and familiar; there is nothing shadowy or obscure about it, and it is grasped as a whole with perfect ease. Mr. Gall has ably explained and applied this interesting fact. The child, he says, when left to nature's teaching,

learns one thing at a time, and learns it with ease and pleasure. Having learned by perception, it soon becomes able to recall its perceptions, or conceive of things already learned. Then, the parts being clearly known and understood, groups of conceptions are easily formed and vividly realized; the parts being clear, the whole scene becomes clear likewise, and, in addition, is afterwards easily recalled to mind.

When, therefore, we come to instruct children who have arrived at the age of conception, something more is needed than the substitution of verbal description for pictorial representation—of word pictures for visual pictures. Few teachers, perhaps, abstain from all attempts at "pictorial teaching;" but the details of each picture ought to be clear and vivid, and consequently the *parts* must be thoroughly explained and realized before the *whole* is set before the pupil. The child's *attention* must be directed to each part of the Bible scene or narrative we wish to lay before him. The whole must then be familiarly illustrated, and its connection with truth already taught pointed out. Attention and association, the two conditions of memory, will then have been called into exercise, and, we may hope, new truth firmly fixed in the pupil's mind.

But when, passing from our junior scholars, we direct our attention to those older children of ten years and upwards who compose our Scripture classes, and form so large and interesting a section of our pupils, it needs no very lengthened observation to

enable us to perceive that the intellect has undergone certain developments which mark the advent of a period often termed the AGE OF REASON. Upon these it will be desirable to dwell, since upon the character of our Scripture class teaching our influence largely depends.

Now, every one is aware that the boy or girl *knows more* at ten than at six; that of any of our elder scholars we can safely affirm his knowledge is now greater than it ever was before.

Information, it is true, is acquired more slowly, and perhaps less pleasantly, than in the earliest days of childhood; but the store was never so ample as now. From parents and teachers, but especially by voluntary acts, a large amount of knowledge has been gained; differing in kind and degree in different individuals, according to character and circumstances, but greater in quantity than at any former time.

From this long-continued exercise of the understanding, its powers have necessarily acquired a firmer grasp and a wider range than heretofore. To quote the oft-repeated simile, the intellectual "bottle" is no longer so "small" nor so "narrow-necked" as in early childhood. Its capacity and its orifice are alike enlarged. It will hold more of the waters of knowledge, and more may be poured in at one time without waste. Hence result two important requisites on the side of the teacher:—*He must be more amply furnished with information*, and *he must communicate more at each lesson*. It is obvious that those commonplace truths which are novelties to the infant of five years,

are stale and uninteresting truisms to the boy or girl of twelve. Their intellectual appetites demand more substantial food, and he who caters for those appetites must be prepared to impart it.

Again;—*the memory is increasingly retentive.*—The power to retain more accompanies the power to receive more. The secular teacher (as most of us can testify from personal experience) avails himself of this circumstance to increase the number and length of his pupil's tasks, and to submit him to severer examinations. But Sunday school teachers appear to me to be somewhat remiss and inconsistent in the treatment of their elder scholars, for whom they provide repetition lessons scarcely different from those set for junior pupils, and in most cases so ridiculously short that it may be questioned whether it would not be advisable to dispense with them altogether, especially when we consider the disgraceful slovenliness with which they are usually repeated. If, in deference to the fear of rendering the Sunday class "too scholastic," such brief lessons are retained, teachers should at least require that the exercise be correctly performed.

The vigour displayed by the memory at the age we are now considering, imposes upon conductors of Scripture classes the duty of providing a constant supply of new matter in the instruction of their pupils. The rule, "line upon line," is now applicable in spirit rather than in letter. The scholar needs less of repetition for his own sake; and if it be given, is better able to recognize the iteration. Some one asked Dr. Arnold why he continued to study for his

pupils as though he feared he should not have enough to give them? "It is not," replied the head master of Rugby, "because I fear I should not have enough to give them, but because I prefer that they should be supplied from a running stream rather than from a stagnant pool." In plain fact, however, there *is* a fear—at least in the case of minds less amply furnished than that of Dr. Arnold—that, unless constantly replenished by study, the stream of instruction will grow feebler and narrower, and if not entirely dried up, will lose alike its freshness and its power. I recently listened to a conversation respecting an educational pamphlet, the author of which had not published anything on the same subject for many years. "Pooh!" was the contemptuous criticism, as the leaves were turned over, "we heard all this long ago. The man has grown no bigger than he was a quarter of a century back. Here are the old stories and stale suggestions dished up as new!" The critic was right; and many an elder scholar has experienced similar feelings as he has listened to the same ideas, clothed in the same phrases, and accompanied by the same illustrations, till he knows them all by heart, and is tempted to break forth into an indignant remonstrance like that of the ragged school boy, "Why, teacher, you surely ain't a-going to cut that 'ere fig tree down agen?"

Another peculiarity of the age we are now considering is *increased command over the attention.* It has been already remarked that the attention of a young child is not under his own control; but in the educa-

tional stage represented by our Scripture scholars the case is different. They have acquired a degree of control over the faculty of attention, and its absence is no longer a mere result of mental feebleness.

Physical expedients for maintaining attention, such as manual exercises, change of posture, &c., may now be almost, if not altogether, dispensed with. The mind, like the body, is, if we may so say, firmer and more consolidated; and a Sunday school lesson of ordinary length ought to impose no excessive tax on either.

It may further be remarked, that the pupil's mind can now *grasp abstract ideas*. In other words, it can contemplate the qualities of things separate or *abstracted* from the things themselves.

But the most remarkable feature of the age we are considering is, as already hinted, the *development of the reasoning or reflective faculties*, with which the power last mentioned is very closely connected. The AGE OF REASON, JUDGMENT, or REFLECTION, has arrived.

This development is not unfrequently manifested in a manner somewhat startling to the parent or teacher. The faith of the little child gives place to a spirit of free debate and discussion. The pupil is no longer disposed to take every statement upon trust; on the contrary, he submits the sentiments of others to a process of mental analysis, and is not slow to pronounce a verdict on the supposed result. Moral and religious truth is sifted like the rest, and the pious instructor sometimes grows alarmed at what seems to

him nothing less than evidences of incipient infidelity. His fears are groundless; the scholar is simply giving free exercise to the powers which he feels strong within him, and which need training rather than repression. Indeed, they cannot be repressed. Providence has wisely rendered that impossible. If the boy and girl were to go forth into the world with the unreasoning confidence of earlier years, what would be the consequence? Plainly this,—that they would fall a prey to every designing knave with whom they might chance to meet. Reason has been given as a shield; and if ever it obstructs the vision of faith, it is because weak or unskilful hands have removed it from its rightful place. Yet I would not be thought to imply that this development of the reasoning faculties is other than a solemn and important crisis in youthful history. It is fraught with momentous consequences to the pupil, and with suggestive lessons to the teacher. One or two of the latter must be briefly adverted to.

The Christian man or woman entrusted with the care of a Scripture class will do well to remember that the exercise of the judgment or reason, in common with that of all the other intellectual powers, is productive of pleasure to its possessor. Just as the teacher of an infant class, therefore, will seek to gratify the *perceptive* powers of the little ones, and the elementary teacher the *conceptive* powers of his young pupils, so the teacher of older lads and lasses will strive to provide suitable material upon which they may exert their powers of *reason*. Of Dr. Adam

Clarke, when a young preacher, his friend Samuel Drew thus wrote:—"He gave us no dogmas; he forced upon us no doctrines; but he set us a-thinking and reasoning, because he thought and reasoned with us himself." The teacher of youth will do well to imitate this example in the Bible lessons given by him to his class. Let him reason and study *with* his pupils, suggesting inquiries—thus providing that which shall provoke thought, and then contemplating it side by side with them. Such a course will greatly tend to attach the young people to the class and its exercises, not to speak of the intellectual benefit conferred upon both teacher and taught.

Having said thus much, it seems hardly needful to utter a word of caution against checking freedom of inquiry or of expression in the class, and so attempting to stifle the scholars' mental development. Where can the workings of young intellects be more safely manifested than in the presence of the pious friend and counsellor? Where can the perplexing difficulty encountered by the pupil in his private reading of Scripture, or the half-formed doubt which has arisen in the course of quiet reflection, or the plausible objection suggested by an unbelieving fellow-apprentice, be more safely grappled with than in the sabbath class? One thing is certain, that if rudely repressed or dogmatically overridden *there*, they will find free scope for expansion in far different soil, where frank and ingenuous inquiry is transformed into rabid scepticism. Especial care must be taken by the teacher never to advance anything in the class which

he does not conscientiously believe, or which he is not prepared to support by sound arguments. Among these opening minds, he must be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him. Weakness or insincerity is certain to be detected by the scholars, and the teacher will be estimated accordingly.

We have thus glanced at some of the intellectual powers, and at the same time marked their development in the youthful mind. Passing now from the region of INTELLECT, we enter the vast and important sphere of the EMOTIONS. Great as is the influence of thought upon character, that of feeling is greater still. It is more closely related to character and action. "As a man thinketh in his heart," says Solomon,—as he feels and desires,—"so is he." "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The affections, rather than the operations of intellect, are the prime movers of conduct. Hence the public teacher who sways the feelings and desires of his pupils will have more influence over their characters and lives than he who merely convinces the understanding. Men err not so much from false conceptions or reasonings as from wrong feelings and a perverted will. It was, therefore, no mean praise when it was written of Pestalozzi,—

> "He, whene'er he taught,
> Put so much of his heart into his act,
> That his example had a magnet force,
> And all were swift to follow whom all loved."

And this prnicipal is of supreme value to the teacher

of children, especially of younger ones. For it is not more true that a man is "a bundle of habits," than that a child is "a bundle of feelings." He is an emotional being,—full of joys and sorrows, keenly sensitive to pleasure and pain. The Æolian harp is not more impressible by the breeze which sweeps its strings, than the heart of the child to every event which crosses its own little experience; and changeful as are such influences, so changeful are the feelings of the child. Laughter rapidly succeeds tears, and tears soon follow laughter.

> "The tear down childhood's cheek which flows
> Is like the dewdrop on the rose;
> When next the summer breeze comes by,
> It waves the bush—the flower is dry."

"How shall I deal with the *emotional* part of my scholars' nature?" is a question which must often be anxiously pondered by every thoughtful and earnest teacher. Permit me to offer a few plain suggestions.

The desires, feelings, and affections—the moral powers as distinguished from the intellectual—are far too numerous to be dealt with comprehensively here. It must suffice if two or three of the most important, as developed in childhood, are briefly alluded to, and their use to the teacher pointed out.

Most of the emotions—I now employ the term comprehensively—are pleasurable. Their exercise, therefore, like that of the physical and intellectual powers, is a source of gratification to the possessor. This is chiefly what we mean when we say that children love "excitement;" they delight in anything

which awakens strong feelings; and many a teacher mournfully contrasts the lively emotions of his scholars when at play, with their listless apathy when *apparently* under tuition. Let me mention, first,—

Curiosity, or the love of knowledge. This is the desire for new ideas. Since new ideas mostly impart pleasure, the child soon learns to seek them; hence the immense acquisitions which he makes to his knowledge in the first three years of his life. What is called the love of novelty is simply curiosity. New ideas gratify curiosity by imparting knowledge; hence they are sought after by the child. The teacher must therefore be prepared, in all his instructions, with new objects of thought: in the infant class, with new pictures and stories; in the elementary class, with new conceptions and illustrations; in the elder class, with new illustrations and new modes of presenting doctrinal truth.

The reason why so few teachers know how to awaken curiosity, and in consequence lively interest, on the part of their scholars, is twofold. They bring new truths to younger children, but the truths have no bearing upon their daily life—do not belong to childish experience. Hence the pupil feels no desire to grasp or retain them. A description of Babbage's calculating machine, or an account of the Astronomer Royal's experiments in Harton coal-pit, would doubtless be something quite new to an infant class, but whether it would be interesting is another question. A child does not grasp at all new truths, though the world is to him full of them; but only takes hold of such as appear to concern him.

Others, who instruct elder children, present old truths in an old form. They bring out of their treasury things old, but not things new; and hence their pupils are listless and uninterested. For be it remembered, that although we feel a pleasure in having old conceptions and feelings revived, there is generally a degree of novelty, "a freshness," as we say, surrounding that process; and in the young child it is almost like the presentation of a new truth. But in more advanced scholars the mind soon tires of that which is essentially old. The Sunday school instructor, therefore, must do with his knowledge as Dr. Johnson says we should do with our friendship,—"keep it in constant repair."

Closely connected with curiosity is what Professor Bain calls the *Emotion of Pursuit;* in other words, the feeling with which we contemplate anything approaching a crisis. The schoolboy who watches a cricket match, and the boarding school Miss who sits up till morning in order to finish a French novel, are influenced by this kind of feeling. So, in Longfellow's song of "The Village Blacksmith," the children delight to watch the progress of the good smith's handicraft:—

> 'The children, coming home from school,
> Look in at the open door;
> They love to see the flaming forge,
> And to hear the bellows roar,
> And catch the burning sparks that fly
> Like chaff from the threshing-floor."

A skilful teacher will not be slow to gratify this

emotion, which may often be accomplished by an interesting story, in which the *dénouement* is reserved until the close.

The *Emotion of Wonder* is a continual tenant of a child's heart; and, indeed, the more untrained the mind, the greater will be the pleasure which this feeling yields. Under its influence, crowds rush to stare at a simple optical illusion, or eagerly gaze, until fairly bewildered, into the interior of a "crystal globe." To a child the world is nearly all ghosts and crystal globes; and the teacher who can skilfully exhibit them may make his (educational) fortune. It is a fact of no little importance, that in the striking narratives of the Old and New Testaments, we have an endless series of wonder-awakening stories. The pleasure derived from wonder, combined with that afforded by the exercise of the conceptive and imaginative faculties, is probably the source of the delight which children feel in reading or hearing the old-fashioned nursery tales. I have most willingly included in the small library of my own little ones, numerous specimens of such literature as the biographies of "Old Mother Hubbard," "Little Jack Horner," "Cock Robin," and "The Three Bears;" and on asking one of them, who had been laughingly listening to "The Three Bears," "Now, don't you like nonsense stories?" she replied, with an energetic little stamp of the foot, "Yes, I DO."

The *Love of Power* is another important feeling in childhood. We do not mean ambition, but the

feeling of ability to exercise the bodily, or mental, or moral powers. I have sometimes heard such a remark as this,—"Well, I cannot imagine why it is that boys have such a passion for throwing stones." There is no mystery at all about the matter. The effort of throwing gratifies the love of power; the same that leads "the strong man" to "rejoice to run a race;" while the uncertainty where the stone will strike, or how far it will go, awakens the "emotion of pursuit," already referred to. And so of the innumerable activities which a child puts forth from day to day.

A wise teacher will seek to encourage rather than repress that fine exercise of the opening faculties which gives rise to feelings so pleasurable. He will encourage and stimulate the perception of the infant, the imagination of the child, and the reason of the youth, and in so doing will render the school class an increasingly pleasant place.

The *Love of Communicating* is a marked feature in the character of childhood, and manifests itself without restraint, if not roughly and senselessly repressed, at a very early period. A judicious parent or teacher will encourage this communicativeness, and listen with patience and all possible interest even to the trifles which are so frequently the subject of childish prattle. Independently of the pleasure accruing therefrom, the child is benefited both intellectually and morally. That which is communicated is thereby more firmly implanted in the memory, and a candid and open disposition is promoted instead of a spirit of slyness and reserve.

And then who does not recognize the child's *Love of Society?* Before contact with a hard and unsympathizing world has awakened suspicion, and the feeling of isolation which flows from suspicion, how intensely does it enjoy the society of others! What teacher of a large class has not marked the delight arising from the feeling of "togetherness," as Mr. Curwen expressively terms it? The fact is, that in the society of others the child's affections find their freest and fullest development. It loves knowledge, it loves activity, it loves inanimate objects, it loves its wooden horse, its wax doll, its kitten, bird, or dog; but its best affections are reserved for human beings—parent and teacher, brother, sister, and schoolmate. "In our early youth," says Samuel Rogers, "while yet we live only among those we love, we love without restraint, and our hearts overflow in every look, word, and action." And it is these affections and feelings which not only render young children so endearing to others, but are also the chief agents in forming their own opening characters. How momentous, then, is the culture and regulation of a child's moral feelings!

We are often reminded that laughing, crying, gaping, and yawning are "contagious." In young children, *all* the feelings are contagious. The medal is not more truly correspondent to the die, than the emotions of a child to the emotions of those by whom it is constantly surrounded. Irritation in the parent produces irritation in the child; sourness in the

teacher begets acidity in the pupil; rudeness in the scholar leads to rudeness in his schoolfellows. This correspondence is most marked and unrestricted in younger children, for reason has then no power to modify or correct it. Hence the first period of moral development is called the AGE OF SYMPATHY. The word is used in its literal sense—the child and teacher "feel together." Feeling awakens corresponding feeling. Our duty, then, is obvious to the understanding, though to carry it out may be far from easy. We must cultivate the moral nature by *example* and by *training*. Permit me to offer an illustration of each. The first is from Abbott's "Way to do Good:"—"You are walking with a little child, on a pleasant morning in the last of February, on the crust of the snow, and some little snow-birds hop along before you, picking the seeds from the stems of the herbage which the wintry storms have not entirely covered. You say, perhaps, 'Oh, see that little bird! Shall I throw my cane at him?' 'Oh, no, indeed; it would hurt him very much; or if it did not hurt him, it would frighten him very much. I am sure I would not hurt that little bird. He is picking up the seeds; I am glad he can find those little seeds. They taste very sweet to him, I suppose. I wish I had some crumbs of bread to give him.' 'Do you think he is cold?' 'No, he is all covered with warm feathers, I do not think he is cold; only his feet are not covered with feathers, I hope they are not cold.'

"Suppose now, on the other hand, you say, 'Stop,

there's a snow-bird; stand back a minute, and see how quick I will knock him down with my cane. If I once hit him, I will warrant he will never hop again.'

"Now," continues Mr. Abbott, "these are all mere expressions of your own feeling, and [yet,] in nine cases out of ten, the child who would listen to them would find his heart gliding spontaneously into the same state with your own, whether it were that of kindness or cruelty. This mere utterance of the sentiment or feeling of your heart would, except where some peculiar counteracting causes prevent it, awaken the like in him."

What an argument is this, first, for the possession of right feelings and emotions; and, secondly, for their free and fervent expression in our religious teaching! It is this which gives to the earnest, feeling teacher such power over young children, in comparison with the cold and formal instructor, though in some respects the latter may be more skilful and intelligent. Nor is suitable and expressive tone, manner, and gesture to be overlooked. Anything which will more fully manifest feeling is valuable to the moral and religious educator.

"Thou must be true thyself
If thou the truth wouldst teach;
Thy soul must overflow if thou
Another's soul wouldst reach:
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech."

The second mode of cultivating the feelings is by

training, by which I mean causing the learner to perform acts corresponding with the feelings which it is desired to evoke. Philosophically regarded, this might seem like reversing the right order of things; but the fact remains, that not only does feeling lead to action, but action also reacts upon feeling. "I should have been altogether lost," said an American statesman, "in the dark abyss of infidelity but for one thing. I never could shake off the impression produced in early childhood when my mother used to put my hands in hers, and teach me to say 'Our Father.'" And so with every Christian parent who —

> "Joins the little hands in prayer,
> Telling of One who sees in secret there."

The *act* of devotion is taught, in hope that by this training, combined with suitable example, the *feeling* of devotion may be awakened. Carrying out this thoroughly scriptural principle, we rightly train our scholars to acts of prayer and praise before we have the cheering evidences of inward and heartfelt devotion, and accustom them to acts of benevolence and charity before we are satisfied that corresponding feelings have been implanted in their bosoms. By this simple means true and genuine emotions are often awakened, and by being frequently repeated, the acts become *habits*, and through *association* the sentiments become permanently joined with them.

The *Imitativeness* of children is a feeling to which reference is always made when juvenile characteristics have to be enumerated. The desire to repeat actions

which have been witnessed is developed at a very early age; yet it is questionable whether it be, as some have asserted, merely instinctive. I venture to think that it is referable to *association*. The child early learns to associate action with pleasurable feelings, and therefore, when he witnesses an act performed by another, the desire to repeat it arises in virtue of the association. The propensity we are considering is, therefore, a disposition arising out of an intellectual process. Its early development will be no objection to the view now taken, if we remember that even perception is based on these same laws of association. The disposition to imitate is at first indiscriminate, but experience soon teaches the child that some acts of imitation bring pain instead of pleasure. Through lack of moral judgment, however, the child is unable to determine the *moral* quality of the actions which it witnesses; and therefore it will learn to imitate those which are presented most strongly to its observation, whether they be good or bad, and to form corresponding *habits*.

The imitativeness of children, no less than their sympathetic nature, consequently calls for the utmost vigilance and self-culture on the part of the conscientious teacher, so that during his intercourse with his young pupils he may set before them only such acts as shall be worthy of their imitation, and may abstain with scrupulous care from all that would tend to lead them astray. The Christian instructor of children, realizing this mighty force of personal conduct—of passing words and deeds, and of habitual tone and

manner, will hardly fail to find in it a powerful motive to watchfulness and prayer, and will often breathe the desire so well expressed by the poet,—

> "Make me to walk in Thy commands,
> 'Tis a delightful road;
> Nor let my head, or heart, or hands
> Offend against my God."

The foregoing characteristics are among the most obvious and salient points in a child's moral nature, and begin to manifest themselves at a very early age.

The child next enters upon a stage of development known as the AGE OF APPROBATION, in which the *love* or *desire of praise* comes prominently into view. The learner looks for the approval of parent or teacher as the reward of exertion or right-doing. And perhaps few points in ethics have been longer or more loudly debated than the question whether the desire of approbation be right or wrong, and consequently whether it ought to be fostered or repressed. Disclaiming all intention of plunging into this discussion, which is as old as the days of the Stoics and Sadducees, I would offer three brief remarks:—

Firstly. That nothing stimulates a child to intellectual or moral effort like judicious praise, while nothing so chills and paralyzes his exertions as the absence of it. For one lad who, like Sir William Jones, has risen above the deadening influence of neglect, twenty have sunk into hopeless torpor of mind and heart, or, worse still, into reckless perversity. Dr. Adam Clarke relates that, when a little boy at

school, the master took occasion to apologize to a brother pedagogue for the pupil's extreme dulness. "Never fear, sir," was the reply; "the boy will make a bright man yet." Dr. Clarke records that this timely and judicious word of encouragement had no small share in fulfilling the prediction. And among the rules adopted for the government of the remarkable family of the Wesleys was the following:—

"That every signal act of obedience, especially when it crossed their own inclinations, should be always commended, and frequently rewarded, according to the merits of the case; and if any child performed an act of obedience, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted, and the child with sweetness directed how to do better for the future."

Secondly. That those who denounce the feeling in question are in many respects subject to its influence. No right-minded man is indifferent to the opinion of his fellow-creatures, and if not indifferent he must desire their approval. Who does not desire to bear a good character? and what is a good character but the approbation of others in respect to our moral conduct?

Thirdly. That the desire of praise from God and man is sanctioned by Scripture example and precept. We take the highest of all authority. Our blessed Lord taught the good and faithful servant to expect words of commendation and exalted honours from his approving master; and He himself, we are assured,

"endured the cross, despising the shame," "*for the joy that was set before Him.*"

If these considerations be deemed sufficient to warrant the sanction, on the part of Sunday school teachers, of the love of approbation, let that feeling be wisely encouraged, and let the young scholar be taught and trained to every right word and work, that he may gain the approval of companions, parents, teacher, and, above all, of God himself.

As childhood speeds away, the AGE OF CONSCIENCE, or the moral principle, is entered upon. This is the final stage of moral development, as the *Period of Judgment* or *Reason* is of intellectual development; and it is represented in our school organization by our Scripture class scholars.

The natural relations of these two periods will be evident if we remember that conscience is only another name for the moral *judgment* or moral sense. But it may fairly be asked, "Is the development of conscience deferred to so late a period? Are not its manifestations as evident in young children as in those who are older?"

Conscience, it must be remembered, operates in a twofold manner. It has a *directive* or *legislative* function, determining whether an act is right or wrong *before it is performed.* It has also an *executive* function, "accusing or else excusing" its possessor *after a given act has been performed.* Now this latter function is exercised at a very early age, and in virtue of it the child feels self-commended for acts known to

be right, and self-condemned for conduct of an opposite character. But conscience does not become a moral guide until a later period—in fact, until the age of reason has arrived, and the boy or girl is prepared to assume greater independence of thought and feeling than heretofore. The reason for this lateness of development, if I may call it so, seems not difficult to discover. In determining whether a proposed course be morally right or wrong, we mentally refer it, if I mistake not, to a given *class* of actions, and upon that decide it to be good or bad. Now this process of classification can hardly be performed until the *age of judgment* has been reached. Hence we speak of this AGE as being also the PERIOD OF CONSCIENCE, or that in which the *directive* or *legislative* power of conscience comes into vigorous exercise.

In the discharge of his high commission, the teacher of young people who have arrived at this stage of moral progress will strive to inform their understandings upon all needful matters of truth and duty. He wil endeavour to convince them that this is truth, and that error; this the path of duty, and that the way of sin; thus continuing, let us hope, the good work of moral instruction begun by other teachers in previous years. On the other hand, he will put forth continual efforts to train the young people to a life of constant obedience to the voice of conscience; striving to impress them with the advantages of such a course, and the perils of turning a deaf ear to the monitor within. He will constantly remind them of the great fact of their accountability, and point out to them the

relations in which they now stand to the Supreme Being, to the message of salvation through Christ Jesus, to the means of grace and ordinances of religion, and to the moral influences by which they may be surrounded. And if the scholar have been well taught and trained in preceding periods of his moral history, that appeal will seldom be made in vain. The educated conscience will speak, and speak loudly, and the teacher's efforts must be directed to gain for it a hearty obedience as well as a patient hearing.

Diminished sensibility is another moral characteristic of the young people who occupy our Scripture classes, but especially of male scholars. The judgment now asserts its power as a check and corrective to emotion, otherwise the character would never acquire strength and consistency. Doubtless the growth of evil in the unrenewed heart has something to do with the apparent unimpressibility of many young people in our schools, but probably not so much as is sometimes supposed. The judicious teacher, instead of indulging in useless regrets, will so modify his methods of teaching as to appeal to the feelings *through* the judgment, instead of trying to excite emotion independently of the understanding. He should first seek to *convince*, and then use the convictions of the intellect as an aid in impressing the heart.

Self-confidence is another growth of the period under consideration. It is a plant, no doubt, which needs careful and constant pruning; but, be it remembered, it bears precious fruit if wisely trained. Youth is confident in its own opinions and powers,

extravagantly and offensively so in some cases; but out of that self-confidence the priceless and all-important quality of *self-reliance* may be evolved. Let Scripture class teachers be "wise as serpents" here. Let not the infirmities of youthful vanity and over-confidence be derisively portrayed or harshly handled, but gently neutralized by the force of truth and the quiet exhibition of the loveliness of humility. It is easy to "take the conceit out" of a boy or girl, and cover the subject of it with confusion; but shame is a cautery whose wounds are often worse than those which it is applied to cure.

The *aspirations* of young people *towards manhood and womanhood* form another characteristic needing equal tact to guide and control. The boy wishes to be manly, the girl aspires to womanliness; and, as a natural consequence, both imitate the ways and manners of those older than themselves.

If I am asked, What should the teacher do with these aspirations and precocities? I reply, Turn them to his own purpose. Make manliness and womanliness grounds for manly and womanly propriety of word and action,—for manly and womanly thoughtfulness. Urge that the time has come when, as reasonable and conscientious beings, they can and ought to render a "reasonable service" to their great Master in heaven, and an equally reasonable obedience to all lawful authority, whether national, parental, or scholastic, on earth. Such a course will be far more likely to secure the teacher's objects than the weakness which ignores the reachings forth

of young minds and hearts towards the dignity of mature years. I have heard Scripture scholars addressed as "dear little children," "tender lambs," and so forth, and taught to sing hymns of an almost infantile character. No wonder that we lose our elder scholars if we persist in refusing to recognize, by new methods of moral treatment, the new and important period of life upon which they have entered.

This precocity is accompanied by a dislike and avoidance of everything which appears childish; and it is, partly at least, on this account that our elder scholars manifest so much *reserve* in reference to their inner life,—deeming it a mark of childish simplicity to be communicative upon such a subject. The considerate teacher will allow for this in his religious conversations with his pupils, and never attempt to extort that which they are unwilling to utter.

One other characteristic of our elder scholars must be mentioned—*the development of the social instincts.* The love of society now assumes a definite form, and one productive of much solicitude, if not perplexity to the watchful teacher. The scholars begin to form associations with those of the opposite sex, while other associations present themselves outside the sabbath circle; and as the passions likewise begin to increase in strength, it is impossible not to anticipate with anxiety the approach of what has fitly been termed "the crisis of being." In dealing with these delicate and difficult matters it appears to me extremely unwise to separate the sexes by

curtains, partitions, and other material barriers. Concealment invites curiosity, as observation and experience universally testify. Nor is the other extreme more prudent. What can be more unwise than, having assembled a number of boys and girls on a winter evening, to keep them until a late hour, and then turn them promiscuously, and without supervision, into the streets of a large town, to see and hear that which cannot but prove morally injurious and provocative of sin? It seems desirable to allow elder scholars free and unrestricted intercourse within the walls of the school, letting them meet there, and endeavouring to make them regard it as a second home, rather than seek other places of resort elsewhere. That they should form connections with their fellow-scholars is not in itself an evil, but the contrary;—where are more suitable associations likely to be found? The mischief lies in affording facilities for boy and girl companionship apart from the exercise of any care or control. Much good might also, I think, be accomplished if the subject were more frequently alluded to in class instruction, in place of the reserve usually maintained by teachers. A little timely and judicious counsel might prevent many a sad mistake, and perhaps many an act of immorality.

And, finally, the age of conscience is characterized, as every teacher knows, by *a marked development of* THE WILL. No one doubts that some tolerably vigorous manifestations of will are made in infancy and early childhood, but these are fitful, spasmodic, and capri-

cious. They are noisy and demonstrative, but lack strength and permanence. The latter qualities are now developed, and demand, as we shall see in a subsequent lecture, the utmost delicacy and tact on the part of the teacher. At the age of reason, young people must be dealt with as reasonable beings, and neither their sympathies nor their desire to please the teacher be appealed to. They have reached the age of conscience, and must be dealt with as capable of discerning the morally right from the morally wrong.

And here we reach the *ultima Thule* of educational science. Here mental and moral philosophy fail us. Precept, example, training—that is all. Hitherto human effort extends, but no farther. As Christian teachers we feel, so long as we look not beyond ourselves, that we are "facing fearful odds." Our foes are legion, but truth is mighty, and we would not quail before avowed enemies. But, alas! there are traitors in the camp. "The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom." We cannot long be companions of childhood before we discover that there is a twist in the moral nature of every descendant of Adam. It is not that intellect is disordered; it performs its part with admirable completeness. The moral nature, too, seems at first almost equally perfect; and as we watch the innocent gaieties of the little child, we can hardly bring ourselves to believe that those varying emotions which are so easily evoked by our own—those affections which we seem able to sway as we will—should have even the germs of perversion

within them. But years roll on, and the strange abnormal tendency manifests itself more and more. Like the aberrant magnet, which deviates from its course when the mariner most needs its guidance, so in the crisis of life's voyage, the heart's affections turn slowly but surely away from the pole-star of heaven. To many this circumstance renders youthful character an insoluble problem. The mystery can only be cleared up on the principles of Holy Writ. "Love" to God, and to man for God's sake, "is the fulfilling of the law," and that love it is not in our power to impart. Like the son of Zacharias, it is ours to prepare the way of the Lord, but we are not the deliverers of Israel. Only One power can fix the wandering heart, and recall it to the path of safety and of truth.

We seek to build the wondrous fabric of human character, and to furnish it with every needful thing. And as we have thought to-night upon all that is required for so great and glorious a fabric, perhaps we have felt constrained to ask ourselves, "How can we carry on such a work as this? How complex the materials! How shall they ever be combined into one harmonious edifice? Surely perplexity and disappointment are all that await us!" God be thanked, He who has called us to build a house for His name, and who designs to fill it with the glory of His presence, knows the difficulties of our task as we never can know them; and He assures us that Infinite Wisdom is ready to instruct and bless the humblest and most unlearned teacher of the young.

Only let him faithfully use that which is given, and daily seek for richer supplies, as well of wisdom as of grace; then let him work on hopefully, prayerfully, joyfully; and as each returning sabbath sees him at his loved employ, his motto will still be that of the Hebrew patriot of old, "In the name of my God I will arise and build."

I have a wondrous house to build,
A dwelling humble yet divine;
A lowly cottage to be filled
With all the jewels of the mine.
How shall I build it strong and fair?
This noble house, this lodging rare,
So small and modest, yet so great,
How shall I fill its chambers bare
With use, with ornament, with state?

My God hath given the stone and clay,—
'Tis I must fashion them aright,
'Tis I must mould them day by day,
And make my labour my delight.
This cot, this palace, this fair home,
This pleasure-house, this holy dome,
Must be in all proportions fit,
That heavenly messengers may come
To lodge with him who tenants it.

Such is the house that I must build;
This is the cottage, this the home,
And this the palace, treasure-filled,
For an immortal's earthly home.

O noble work of toil and care,
O task most difficult and rare,
O simple but most arduous plan,
To raise a dwelling-place so fair,
The sanctuary of a Man!

THE INSTRUMENTS:

WHAT TO TEACH.

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In the preceding lecture we directed our attention to the first of the four qualifications indispensable to the skilled teacher, viz., "A KNOWLEDGE OF THE MATERIAL" to be operated upon,—its nature and properties, and the laws and conditions to which it is subject. Hence we entered upon the consideration of the constitution and phenomena of mind in general, and of the juvenile mind in particular. We reviewed the intellectual and moral faculties with which the educator is chiefly concerned, and traced the order of their development; and, as far as time allowed, we took notice of the different modes of teaching and training which these various circumstances required.

The second qualification we saw to be "A CLEAR VIEW OF THE OBJECT TO BE ATTAINED." This is as obviously essential as the one already considered. The graceful forms which spring into life beneath the potter's hand, and those which evidence the taste and skill of the sculptor, existed as conceptions in the artists' minds ere yet the wheel had begun to revolve, or the marble to lose the rugged shapelessness of the

quarry. And so the teacher who desires success must clearly perceive the great end to which his efforts are directed. In the case of the Sunday school worker, I apprehend the object and end of his labours to be as follows:—

1st. To make known to his pupils the Divine character and will, especially as revealed in Holy Scripture.

2nd. To awaken in them feelings conformable to that character and will; and

3rd. To train them to the exercise of a corresponding course of conduct.

When this course of conduct is manifested, the great object of Sunday school instruction has been attained, and the teacher realizes the satisfaction described by the apostle, who declared, "I have no greater joy than to find that my children walk in truth." In a word, the teacher's aim is to bring the child's conduct into harmony with God's revealed will, and to make human life a counterpart of divine truth. Rightly regarded, the work is one before which an erring mortal might well pause in dismay. The traveller in Egypt, as he gazes from afar upon those mighty sepulchres of primeval kings which have towered heavenward for four thousand years,—

> "Flinging their shadows o'er the sky,
> Like dials which the wizard, Time,
> Had made to count his ages by,"—

often experiences a feeling of disappointment that they are no greater; and it is only when he stands at their bases that he realizes how stupendous the

pyramids of the Pharaohs really are. And so, men who casually view from a distance our unobtrusive work—and even we ourselves in our more listless moods,—may deem Sunday school teaching a light thing; but let it only be confronted in its sublime reality, and we are overwhelmed with its matchless importance, not less than with our own utter insufficiency. It is the moral revolution of humanity, a "turning of the world upside down," that truth may be enthroned and evil subverted. And shall *we* accomplish so vast a transformation? Nay, verily; but God will. And He who bids the humblest worm rear in mid-ocean a dwelling-place for man, and feeds the nations with a lowly grass, deigns to employ even such as we to establish the kingdom of His Son, and supply with the bread of life every tribe and family of the human race.

Since, however, the large majority of Sunday school teachers are happily agreed upon this great question, we may pass at once to the third qualification of the efficient worker,—"A THOROUGH ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE INSTRUMENTS TO BE EMPLOYED." WHAT TO TEACH is the subject of our inquiry.

The tools with which we work are neither numerous nor complicated. A single book, together with a few simple aids to the right understanding of its contents,—these are the implements of our humble craft; and among them THE BIBLE occupies so prominent a place, that the Sunday school teacher is scornfully characterized as a "man of one book," and it is gently hinted that his knowledge and his taste extend no

farther. With equal reason might the painter be reproached with the too exclusive employment of the brush, or the merchant's clerk be charged with narrow-mindedness because the pen is rarely out of his hand. And if we be asked how we can dream of accomplishing so vast a work by means of one well-known book, our reply will resemble that of the Roman farmer. "Bring forth," it was said to him, "the instruments of witchcraft by whose aid you effect these results." Cresinus pointed to his servants, his oxen, and his plough. "These," said he, "are my instruments of witchcraft, but I cannot show you my daily toils and anxious cares." And we answer to those who interrogate us, "True, this plain and homely book is the moral lever by which we seek to move a world, but we cannot show you our meditations or our prayers." Bible truth explained, applied, exemplified,—this is the chief implement we wield, and we desire no other in its place.

I purpose, then, dear fellow-labourers, in the present lecture, to offer a few thoughts on Scripture truth, and its relations to ourselves as its expounders in the Sunday school class. And first let me remark that the *form* in which revealed truth has been presented for our use is one which demands profound admiration and devout thankfulness. The Bible is a book of facts; a history; and a history in the most attractive of all forms—the biographical. Human wisdom would have produced a mass of abstractions, a code of rules, a system of principles—unintelligible to many, and unutterably dull, dry, and disagreeable

to all. Divine wisdom has graciously given a book of personal histories—filled with moving, breathing life,—real, natural, familiar; and herein (as those who followed me in the former lecture will at once perceive) lies the marvellous fitness of the Bible to be the book for all. Had it been otherwise, it could never have been "the children's book." It deals with sensible objects, and hence awakens vivid conceptions; it describes the details of human life, and hence excites the sympathies. Thus each of us, looking back on the well-thumbed books of our early days, recalls the image of the family Bible as the brightest and dearest of them all.

"Thou old and timeworn volume,
Thou friend of childhood's age,
How frequently dear hands for me
Have turned the pictured page!
How oft, his sports forgetting,
The gazing boy was borne,
With joyous heart, by thy sweet art,
To tread the land of morn!

"Thou didst fling wide the portals
Of many a distant zone;
As in a glass I saw them pass,
Faces and forms unknown.
For a new world I thank thee:
The camel wandering free,
The desert calm, and the stately palm,
And the Bedouin's tent I see.

"And thou didst bring them near me,
Hero, and saint, and sage,
Whose deeds were told by the seers of old,
In the Book of books' dread page.

And the fair and bride-like maidens,
Recorded in thy lines,
Well could I trace each form of grace
Amid thy rich designs.

"And I saw the hoary patriarchs
Of old and simple days,
An angel band on either hand
Kept watch upon their ways.
I saw their meek herds drinking
By fount or river shore,
When mute I stood, in thoughtful mood,
Thine open page before.

"Ye seem but as a fable,
O days that are gone by;
That Bible old, with clasps of gold,
That young, believing eye;
Those loved and loving parents,
That childhood blithe and gay,
That calm content, so innocent,
All, all have passed away."

Nor let it be said that the attractiveness of the Bible lies in the profusion of pictorial illustration which so frequently adorns its pages, rather than in Scripture truth itself, for these very illustrations betoken a richness of pictorial element in the book, without which their existence would be impossible. Pictures simply are the realization of that which is already present. Scripture narrative, as a rule, needs little else than distinct apprehension in order to render it attractive, while the doctrinal statements may, in most instances, be exemplified by reference to historic facts in other parts of the sacred volume. And thus the subject of the teacher's weekly preparation

amounts to this,—"How may a given portion of revealed truth be best presented to a given class of children?" and my present design is to offer a few thoughts upon that important subject. These suggestions will probably be more definite if I assume that my hearers use the *Union* "List of Lessons," and the *Union* monthly "Notes." The assumption is probably not far from the truth, and if otherwise, no general principle will in any degree be affected.

Glancing at the portions of Scripture which, by common consent, are made the basis of juvenile instruction, we find them selected, as might have been anticipated, almost exclusively from the historical books of the Old and New Testament. These subjects are presented in one of two forms, either simply as narratives, such as those which form the *Union* "List" for the present year (1864), or in a doctrinal or preceptive form, the leading truth embodied in the history being taken as the title of the lesson, *e. g.*, 'Faith," "Brotherly Love," "Hypocrisy," "We have all sinned," "God alone is to be worshipped." But practically these two methods are nearly identical, for in general class teaching it will make but little difference whether the mere title be historic or doctrinal, so long as the allotted portion of Scripture remains the same. If the story of Gehazi be read, the evils of lying will be the theme of practical comment on the part of any sensible teacher, whether the narrative form part of a series of historical lessons, or be given as an illustration of that particular sin. The duty of the instructor has come to be regarded simply

thus:—to explain a given group of facts, to show the truths which they embody, and to make a personal application of those truths to the consciences of the scholars. Doubtless, in the case of most of the classes in a Sunday school, this correctly represents the teacher's duty. And yet, simple as it may seem to a by-stander, how much it really involves. The pupil, as he walks to his accustomed place in school, seems, in like manner, to be performing the simplest of actions; yet, to describe the muscular movements embodied therein would be both a lengthened and a complex task. And not only so, the act of walking, which seems so natural, is as truly an acquirement as any learned of the schoolmaster, an art, in short, which was with difficulty acquired by the labour of weeks and months. And so the apparently simple duty of explaining and applying a Scripture narrative with clearness, force, and facility, involves an amount of previous effort which it is folly to ignore, and worse than folly to neglect. Neither piety, however deep; nor prayer, however frequent; nor earnestness, however genuine, can compensate for the absence of this preparation for the work of teaching, save in those cases where the defect is involuntary and unavoidable; in such instances, that higher principle operates by which a man's work is "accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not." Assuredly none of *us* can take shelter under such an exceptional law.

Considered in its fullest sense, the preparation of the Sunday school teacher is a subject of wide and comprehensive range. All those multiform agencies,

—seen and unseen, direct and indirect, self-applied and unconsciously experienced—which tend to qualify him for his momentous duties,—his reading and observation, his mental discipline and moral culture, his social fellowships and spiritual exercises—all are comprised in the idea of preparation. To make *this* the theme of a lecture would be to imitate the example of a recent writer, who has composed a book of some ninety pages on the subject of "The Universe," or of that Sunday school teacher who delivered an address on "Time," considered under the three general divisions of "Time past," "Time present," and "Time to come."

My design, therefore, in entering upon the consideration of the "instruments" of Sunday school teaching,—what and how to teach,—is simply, as I have already hinted, to point out the manner in which I think the Bible and other books may most advantageously be handled in the weekly preparation of lessons. We have then to deal with that constantly recurring duty, without which no wise Sunday school labourer will attempt to unfold "the things of God" —that week-day "gathering" which makes ready for a sabbath "scattering" of the seed-corn of imperishable truth.

It would be comparatively easy, and might be tolerably amusing, to sketch the ideal teacher engaged in preparing the lesson appointed for the coming Lord's day. We might picture him in his study, fronted by a massive desk, backed by a well-stored library, and upheld by a comfortable easy-chair.

Such a portrait would gratify the imagination, and might for a while deceive the judgment into a belief in its reality. But contact with the outer world would speedily dispel the illusion. We should find instead, in perhaps the majority of cases, the plain Christian man or woman, the inheritor of merely ordinary educational advantages, possessed of but average talent, claiming but imperfect mental discipline, with but few books and still fewer leisure hours 'twixt Monday morn and Saturday eve. "Truly," we might exclaim, "the picture and the reality have but little in common." Nevertheless, it is better to deal with a rugged fact than with a graceful fiction. And, therefore, if some of my hints seem based upon a very humble estimate of the worker, whatever may have been said of his work, I would ask to be excused on the ground that the tritest suggestions *may* be useful to the wisest, while more pretentious thoughts are inapplicable to the less cultivated; and that it is the imperfectly furnished teacher who stands most in need of assistance,—to which I might add, that the simplest methods and principles are often among the last to be perceived and adopted.

On sitting down to begin the preparation of a Bible lesson, the teacher's first duty is to obtain *clear views* of the appointed portion of revealed truth. These are vitally essential; without them lucid teaching is impossible, for no one can make clear to others that which he does not clearly apprehend himself. I well remember that when I began to learn model drawing my instructor remarked, as he proceeded to fix a simple

object in position, "Now, the first thing we have to do is to teach you to *see*." And doubtless it is with the tongue as with the pencil, nothing can be correctly represented until it is accurately perceived.

To this end the passage may advantageously receive a threefold perusal:—

(1.) It may be viewed first synthetically, or *as a whole*, as a given miracle, biographical episode, or event in history.

(2.) It may be viewed *in its connection* as forming part of a series of events,—as related to what has preceded and what follows.

(3.) It may be viewed *in its various parts*, analytically and in detail.

This last examination of the passage is of especial value to teachers generally, though in the case of those who preside over elder classes the second aspect becomes of increased importance. Minute examination of details lies at the foundation of vivid teaching, and is an essential pre-requisite for the attainment of clear views. It was remarked in the previous lecture that the distinctness of the groups of conceptions which children voluntarily form was due to the fact that they invariably combined only such as were clearly apprehended in themselves—that the parts of the mental picture were understood before the picture was regarded as a whole. In like manner, if we would present clear and well-defined objects of thought to the minds of the young, we must adopt a similar method, and hence must first secure clearness and distinctness in our own. If, to borrow the language

of the photograper, the negative be sharp and well-defined, the copy will prove so likewise; but haziness in the one will assuredly produce indistinctness in the other. The scholar who said "she did not like the new teacher, because she could not tell what she was driving at," simply gave a childish version of the fact that her conceptions inherited the "fogginess" which characterized those of her instructress.

As an aid to the minute and comprehensive study of the appointed lessons, let me here briefly repeat one or two suggestions which appeared in the Sunday School Union's "New Year's Address to Teachers" for 1863. It was there proposed that in commencing the weekly task a slip of paper should be taken, or better still, the "Teacher's Pocket-book" be opened at the proper place, and the following heads of inquiry be jotted down:—W(ords) and P(hrases requiring explanation); Chr(onology); G(eography); N(atural) H(istory); M(anners) and C(ustoms); T(ruths to be taught). Then, as the reading proceeds, the points upon which information or illustration is to be sought are briefly indicated. The teacher would thus anticipate his difficulties at the outset, and not have them confronting him unexpectedly at the close of the week.

The above plan involves, of itself, *three* rules of great importance, which may advantageously be urged before we proceed farther.

(1.) *Preparation should be begun early in the week.*

This is essential to that minute acquaintance with the subjects of teaching upon which I lay such stress. Lessons hurriedly got ready on a Saturday evening

are like those lath and plaster erections so common now-a-days in suburban localities. It will be a fortunate thing if they do not come down with a crash at the critical moment, and overwhelm their builders with dust and confusion. A more excellent way will be to make the Sunday's lesson the subject of your private reading before retiring to rest on the preceding Lord's day evening—the advantage of which will be that you will begin the working-week with a clear knowledge of that subject which you are to deal with at its close, and hence will be prepared to avail yourself of every item of information or illustration which may be presented. Let us learn a lesson from patriarchal history. Israel's noble-hearted ancestor was found rising early on the morning of that day on which his dearest earthly treasure was to be yielded up to God, that he might hasten forward toward the anticipated place of unexampled trial. We, too, have an offering to lay upon the divine altar when each sabbath returns to bless the world. Let us not turn our faces thitherward with laggard steps and unwilling minds, but rather, like Abraham, "lift up our eyes and behold the place afar off."

(2.) *Preparation should be ample.*

By this I do not mean to suggest such preparation as that of a teacher whom I heard of some time back, and who, having engaged to give a lecture on geology (the first thing of the kind he ever attempted—and the *last*), hunted up every work on the subject that he could lay hands on, and took the entire shoal of volumes with him in a cab to the lecture-room. I

simply wish to remind you that more should be prepared than will be actually needed—more information collected than can be communicated. Not only is this necessary on the principle laid down by Mr. Fitch, that no teacher can communicate *all* he knows on a given subject, but also because of the discomfort and embarrassment experienced by him who comes to his class but scantily furnished, and feels that he will speedily be run out of mental stock unless the superintendent's bell should peal forth its welcome tones and put him out of his misery. To this may be added another reason,—that there is always a possibility of the pupils preparing inquiries for the teacher, as well as the teacher preparing inquiries for the pupils, and it is not desirable that the instructor should too frequently have to reply "I don't know" when such occurrences take place.

Something will of course depend upon the attainments of the pupils. More must be taught to an elder than to a junior class; and this of course involves a corresponding amount of preparation. It is not enough that the teacher should know something about his lesson-subject, he must know a great deal about it,—all that full and conscientious preparation is able to tell him concerning it. If, for example, a narrative in the Gospels is his theme, he must acquaint himself with what each evangelist has recorded, comparing Matthew's version with Luke's, and both with that of Mark or John. Even this simple process will yield much information, and prevent many mistakes of common occurrence. The geography, chronology, and anti-

quities of the lesson must also be examined and mastered, and its relation to the context, and to other parts of Scripture, clearly understood.

(3.) *Preparation should be in writing.*

Independently of the "exactness" which is so often quoted as the fruit of committing our thoughts to paper, it may safely be asserted that nothing is so truly our own mental property as that which we have recorded in writing, if we except that which we have taught to others. When the materials of a Bible lesson are drawn out on paper, the sense of vision comes in to aid the memory, and the different parts of the exercise are recollected with greater readiness because of the position they have occupied on the paper.

If any should suppose that the foregoing suggestions are inapplicable to such teachers as are provided with the Union *Notes*, and other periodical "helps" from the same source, I would assure him that no printed aids can possibly supply the want of personal study; that if they could they would be an evil and not a benefit; and that such is certainly not the design of any of this Society's publications. These are intended to facilitate individual preparation, not to supersede it; and when used in accordance with their avowed purpose, I do not hesitate to assert (without in the least subscribing to the professional dogma, "Nothing like leather") that they are the best existing helps to weekly Bible study.

As to other works of Scripture comment and illustration, having written somewhat fully upon them else-

where, it seems unnecessary again to discuss their merits in relation to the teacher.* A few general observations will therefore suffice.

The monthly *Notes* being chiefly expository, those who use them will hardly need to seek much help from commentaries and other works having the same leading feature. I fully agree with Dr. Todd, that "for obtaining interesting and rich views of the Scriptures"—that is to say, of Scripture *doctrines*,—"Matthew Henry's is decidedly the best in the English language." But if Henry's style of unfolding truth be adopted in a Sunday school class, the teacher will soon find that he is "on the wrong tack" altogether. Probably the *opus magnum* of the able minister of Chester is not often thus misused. But unquestionably there are some teachers who think that because the Union *Notes* are arranged in an expository form, therefore the same divisions and subdivisions are to be introduced into the lesson, and the same style and language adopted. Under the influence of this mistake it occasionally happens that the *Notes* are taken into the class, and I once heard of a superintendent whose practice it was to edify the entire school by reading aloud what the *Notes* said on the lesson for the day, as a substitute for an afternoon address. The one practice is well-nigh as objectionable as the other. It is one thing to expound a subject so that a teacher may see all its bearings, and quite another to indicate the best methods of arranging it for the instruction of

* See "The Teacher: His Books, and how to read them." Second Edition. Sunday School Union Price Twopence.

the young. The periodical of which we speak professes to do the former, and that only.

The help especially needed in private preparation is not so much an abundance of EXPOSITION as full EXPLANATION and accurate and striking ILLUSTRATION. Such assistance may be gained from sources like the following:—the footnotes to Doddridge's "Family Expositor;" "Notes on Matthew," and "Notes on Mark and Luke," by Professor Jacobus, of Brooklyn, N. Y. (lately published by Oliphant and Co., at 3s. 6d. each); "A Critical and Explanatory Commentary on the Old and New Testaments," by Drs. Jameson and Brown, and Mr. Fausset, issued by Wesley, in 1s. parts, the text included; Trench's admirable "Notes on the Parables," and "Notes on the Miracles;" Kitto's "Pictorial Bible;" Thomson's "Land and the Book;" "The Bible in the Holy Land," consisting of extracts from Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," and published by Murray at 3s.

But, after all, the notes and comments most valuable to the Sunday school teacher are those which he makes for himself. A thoughtful and intelligent student of the Scriptures, though haply "unlearned," in the common acceptation of the term, might, in a few years, accumulate a store of excellent material, superior to anything contained in any commentary that has yet been issued,—I mean, of course, in its application to Sunday school purposes. And under this conviction, I would respectfully urge upon my fellow-labourers the practice of recording the results of their weekly study in some permanent form.

Archbishop Trench recommends the use of a Bible without marginal references, but having a wide margin, and suggests that the reader should insert his own references, the result of his comparison of "Scripture with Scripture." I would venture to combine with this a second recommendation,—the copy should also be *interleaved*, and the larger the size the better. Bibles having both these peculiarities may occasionally be picked up at bookstalls, but even if specially prepared for the teacher's purpose, they will richly repay the comparatively small outlay involved. How much time and labour (and we do well to economize both) would have been saved, if, for example, those who will have next Sunday to explain and illustrate a given subject could turn to their interleaved Bibles, and avail themselves of the result of their study of that very subject two or three years ago. And in all such researches, let me urge the desirableness of consulting the best works that can be obtained on each subject, avoiding the antiquated and the unreliable. Many persons seem to lose sight of the fact that biblical criticism has made rapid strides during the present century, so that on some points it has very little in common with the criticism of seventy or eighty years ago; and, consequently, we find them going back to exploded facts and obsolete theories, as though no further light had been gained by later researches. Scepticism is wise in its generation; ever on the alert to avail itself of any novel fact or theory which gives even the shadow of support to disbelief, and the religious educators of the young cannot afford to

rest their arguments and expositions upon bases a century old.

Thus far I have spoken of Scripture *narratives*, and the needful pre-requisites for teaching them to the young. But those who have charge of elder classes will frequently have occasion to consider, in a more systematic manner than when passing through an historical series of lesson-subjects, some of the leading doctrines which sacred history embodies and exemplifies. Faith, Justification, the Atonement, the Future State, &c., will have to be discussed in their nature, operations, and results, and not merely as referred to in one or other of their aspects in a given Old or New Testament narrative.

To accomplish this, the teacher's duty, so far as *explanation* is concerned, is to ascertain what Scripture says upon the topic under consideration. Here the printed references in the margin will come into requisition, beside such as the teacher himself may have made in the wide-margined Bible. If additional help be needed, "The Scripture Text Book," published by the Irish Tract Society, may be used. Here the teachings of Holy Writ are grouped together under more than three hundred headings.

In Mr. Inglis's "Bible Text Cyclopædia" the arrangement is somewhat similar, but the texts are printed in full. The price is 7s. 6d.

By such means as have now been suggested, the earnest Christian teacher will not fail to gain clear views of any narrative or doctrine which he may be called

upon to study. Persevering effort will assuredly be needed for the attainment of this, or any other worthy object; but a prayerful use of the instrumentalities now available by all of us will insure a successful result.

(1.) It is easy to test the clearness of our views of a given subject. If it be a Scripture *incident*, the true test is, Can we picture out the scene so that any one could mentally see the whole?

Take the following fragment of descriptive writing from the pen of Mr. Ruskin:—"On the bank of moor which forms the foreground are a few cows, the carter's dog barking at a vixenish one; the milkmaid is feeding another, a gentle white one, which turns its head to her, expectant of a handful of fresh hay which she has brought for it in her blue apron, fastened up round her waist; she stands with her pail on her head, evidently the village coquette, for she has a neat bodice and pretty striped petticoat under the blue apron, and red stockings. Nearer us the cowherd, barefooted, stands on a piece of the limestone rock (for the ground is thirsty, and not pleasurable to bare feet),—whether boy or girl we are not sure; it may be a boy with a girl's worn-out bonnet on, or a girl with a pair of ragged trousers on; probably the first, as the old bonnet is evidently useful to keep the sun out of our eyes when we are looking for strayed cows among the moorland hollows, and helps us at present to watch (holding the bonnet's edge down) the quarrel of the vixenish cow with the dog, which, leaning on our long stick, we allow to proceed without any interference. A little to the right the hay is being got in, of which the milkmaid has just taken

her apron full to the white cow; but the hay is very thin, and cannot well be raked up because of the rocks, we must glean it like corn; hence the smallness of our stack behind the willows; and a woman is pressing a bundle of it hard together, kneeling against the rock's edge, to carry it safely to the hay-cart without dropping any. Beyond the village is a rocky hill, deep set with brushwood, a square crag or two of limestone emerging here and there, with pleasant turf on their brows, heaved in russet and mossy mounds against the sky, which, clear and calm, and as golden as the moss, stretches down behind it towards the sea."

Can any one question the intensity of clearness of conception on the part of the writer of the foregoing word-picture, or doubt that the most minute and careful study of the original picture lay at the root of that conception?

(2.) But if a *doctrine* be the subject of study, the ability to give a complete *definition* of it may often be employed as a test of the clearness of the teacher's views. A complete definition must accurately represent the *essentials* of the thing defined *and no more*. It must apply to nothing beside, and be neither deficient nor redundant. Thus, for example, Plato's definition of man as a "two-legged animal without feathers" was incomplete, for the description would apply to some kinds of reptiles as well as to man.

Man is sometimes defined by popular writers as a "cooking animal." It is true that no other animal is known to roast or boil its food; but the definition is faulty, since cooking is an *accident* not an *essential* of humanity. A man would not cease to be such by

adopting a diet of raw apples and undressed salads, though his wisdom and taste might be open to question.

On the other hand, the answer given in the "Assembly's Catechism" to the inquiry "What is Prayer?" is faulty through redundance. "Prayer," we were taught to say, "is the offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to His will." Consonance to the Divine will is not necessarily a quality of prayer. Moses prayed, "O Lord God, . . . let me go over and see the good land," but the prayer was *not* "agreeable to" God's "will," and hence was not granted.

It will thus be seen that the ability to give a complete definition of a Scripture doctrine is no mean test of clearness of apprehension. Let not the conscientious teacher begrudge the painstaking efforts by which clear views are at length attained.

The habit of attending to minute details in external objects or written statements is in itself of inestimable value, not only facilitating the acquisition of knowledge but also increasing the power of accurate discrimination between truth and error. An anecdote of the late Archbishop of Dublin, recently recorded in the newspapers, will illustrate this point. A fellow-collegian complained to Whately that he could make no progress in his studies, and thought he must obtain a private tutor, or, in academic phraseology, "get a coach." "Get a coach!" cried the future archbishop, —"get a pupil!" His friend took the hint and the

pupil, and by mastering the elementary details of the subject, surmounted the difficulties which had perplexed him.

I have read, too, that on one occasion a young medical student waited upon the illustrious Cuvier and announced a discovery which he thought he had made in the anatomy of the human body, at variance with the views generally received upon the subject. The philosopher listened to him patiently, and then kindly asked, "Did you ever dissect a beetle?" The student confessed that he had not. "Then take my advice," rejoined Cuvier; "go home and carefully dissect a beetle. Then, if on re-investigating the disputed point, your opinion remains unchanged, call on me again." The young man took the friendly hint, and, by adopting it, discovered that he had been in error.

And beside the personal gain to the teacher, clear views impart additional value to the instruction which he gives, rendering description more accurate and more vivid and attractive, and doctrinal statements more easy of comprehension. The perfect truthfulness of Mr. Ruskin's word-picture, just now quoted, is undoubtedly an element in its attractiveness, while it at the same time conveys new information.

But no thoughtful teacher will fail to perceive that an acquaintance with Scripture facts and doctrines, however accurate, is only a part of his work of preparation, and their communication only a step (though an important one) in the instruction of the pupil. "All knowledge," we are reminded by Bacon, "is to be re-

ferred to use and action;" and this is especially true of moral and religious knowledge. A child may be rendered a walking cyclopædia of Biblical fact and religious doctrine, and yet, if he do not clearly recognize the practical bearings of those facts and doctrines, they rest in his understanding as useless and inactive as corn grains in the withered palm of an Egyptian mummy. And it is because the tenets of orthodoxy are held, and held intelligently, by many in whom they are thus practically inoperative, that our ears are so often saluted by the wild outcry of "What is a creed?" The denouncers of creeds lose sight of the fact that a want of application of general principles, and not the holding of those principles themselves, is the cause of the evil complained of. Mr. Gall, of Edinburgh, deserves the hearty thanks of religious teachers of the young for his clear and reiterated appeals for a strictly practical use of Scripture truths, both historic and doctrinal. The lesson system which bears his name essentially consists of this simple process—the presentation of a fact, and the proposal of the question, "What does that teach?" One example, as given by Mr. Gall in his "Philosophy of Education," will suffice. "Suppose," he says, "a child in the act of reading the history of Cain and Abel in the manner in which it is commonly read by the young, and that the child thoroughly understands all the circumstances. He may be deeply interested in the story, while the uses to be made of it may not be very clearly perceived. But if, after reading any of the moral circumstances, such as 'Cain hated his brother,' or after hearing it announced

to him by the teacher, he was asked, 'What does that teach you?' the practical use of the truth would at once be forced upon his mind, and he would now very readily answer, 'It teaches me that I should not hate my brother.'"

This method of dealing with Scripture narrative has now become so general that there are few, if any, intelligent Sunday school teachers who do not make the "drawing of lessons" a leading part of the sabbath class exercises. They feel that upon these practical truths the success of the teaching instrumentally depends. The fact, and even the doctrine or general principle which it involves, may be received and understood, but if the particular application of the principle to the learner's character and circumstances be not apprehended, the work of instruction is felt to have fallen short of the mark. And yet permit me to call your attention to a serious defect which, as it appears to me, characterizes Mr. Gall's system, and also, to some extent, the method of "lesson-drawing" adopted by teachers generally.

Take one example—that just quoted. The fact read by the scholar is that "Cain hated his brother." The inference drawn or expected to be drawn is, "I should not hate my brother." But how does such a conclusion follow from the premises? Not directly, as the merest glance suffices to show; but only through some intermediate proposition, *e.g.*, that "hatred is forbidden by God," or that "love to brethren is commanded by Him," otherwise the conclusion is illogical, however right in itself. If it be replied that the

scholar is supposed to know this, I would ask whether it is wiser to assume such knowledge, or to elicit it by questioning? If the pupil knows the general truth, of which the lesson he draws is a particular application, surely that knowledge will be deepened by being elicited; and if he does not (a very frequent occurrence, it is to be feared), is it well to encourage him in drawing unsound conclusions, however pleasing they may be in a moral point of view?

Let the careful teacher, then, in preparing for his class, give special attention, not merely to the practical lessons which strike him as deducible from the allotted Scripture portion, but even more special attention to the general principles from which they flow, always remembering that unsound inferences are easily detected by young reasoners, and when discovered, seriously impair the force of anything else which the teacher may bring forward. Good impressions are not facilitated by bad logic. These general principles, moreover, are not always easily reached; or rather, I should say, it requires many steps of reasoning to reach them fairly, and although the teacher's mind may speedily arrive at them by long strides, that of the pupil cannot accompany it. Now it is highly desirable that our scholars—I now speak of Scripture scholars—should be able to perceive the drift of our remarks when we thus rise from a particular fact, or group of facts, to some grand doctrinal truth. For this, among other reasons, it is far better to seize upon some obvious principle easily reached; and when that is fairly grasped

by the pupil, to apply it in a pointed, energetic, and practical manner, or rather lead the scholar so to apply it, than by hurried questioning to elicit a host of so-called inferences, which, whether right or wrong in themselves, can seldom be directly deduced from the facts presented.

It is desirable that the teacher should deduce and record for himself the leading doctrine or doctrines of his lesson-subject as early in the week as circumstances will permit, inasmuch as he will need to obtain at least two or three suitable *illustrations* of them. Doctrinal truths, presented in an abstract or general form, rarely produce any impression upon the memory or heart of a child. Having devoted a separate treatise* to the consideration of these most important aids to good teaching, I will merely observe, that if any young Sunday school workers should inquire, "Whence shall we obtain suitable illustrations, for though we often meet with them, we can never recall them at the time they are wanted?" I would assure such, that the only course to be pursued is to imitate those persons who are smitten with the postage-stamp epidemic, and make a collection of their own. Doubtless the *Biblical Treasury*, printed collections of anecdotes, &c., will often be of service, but, as with notes, so with illustrations, there are none equal to those which a teacher compiles for his own use. Let us, like the

* See the little work, "Illustrative Teaching," 4th edition, (Sunday School Union, price 6d.)

farmers in the fable, do the reaping ourselves, build our own barns, and store up the results of our own labour. For the present purpose I am accustomed to use two books,—a common ruled ciphering book for MS. illustrations, and a scrap-book for printed extracts. Each fact or figure is entered or pasted in as gathered, and the title placed in the index. The plan is very simple, but it may be recommended with confidence. Let not the trouble be grudged, when it is remembered that a good illustration *simplifies*, *beautifies*, and *impresses* the truth which it is designed to embody.

The practical tendency of Mr. Gall's lesson system, referred to just now, is not its only merit. It is essentially an *interrogative* method, the fault being that the questions are all of one type.

Now it is almost impossible to write or speak on this subject of teaching without referring to the use and importance of *questioning*, and while disclaiming any intention of attempting to repeat what our excellent friend Mr. Fitch has said so clearly and pointedly in his valuable tract on the Art of Questioning, I feel that I must not pass the topic by, even in the present lecture.

Our American fellow-labourers so fully recognize the position and influence of prepared questions in Sunday school instruction, that they largely employ printed helps to the performance of that duty. Next to the Bible and hymn book, the question book holds the most prominent place among the teacher's instruments,

thus throwing Scripture into the catechetical form, instead of employing catechisms as a mere accompaniment. Such books partake, of course, of the objection to printed forms in general, as tending to render teaching mechanical, and to lower the teacher in the eyes of the pupils, so that many of the latter *think* what one lad is reported to have said,—"If I only had his book I could teach as well myself." As of notes and illustrations, so of questions, the teacher must prepare them for himself, otherwise he must needs feel as unsuitably equipped as was the shepherd of Bethlehem in the armour of King Saul.

In all sound methods of instruction, the question, as the great mental stimulant, must hold a prominent place. Nothing is so truly thought-awakening as a well-put question. Need I remind you how it was wielded by Socrates of old, or how it formed a distinguishing peculiarity in the method adopted by Dr. Arnold, of Rugby? Or need I rise to the highest precedent of all, and suggest that the questions proposed by our blessed Lord are, like His illustrations, striking and instructive characteristics of His inimitable teachings?

As nothing facilitates the progress of tuition like skilful interrogation, so nothing is more embarrassing than its opposite; hence random questions are not only unsatisfactory in themselves, but positively suicidal to him who proposes them. Who has not witnessed instances of this kind? The teacher asks one question after another; he does not get the answers he wants, but *does* get those he doesn't want

these lead him into excursions which he never intended, and cause him to lose his way; he hesitates and flounders about; the children grow as uneasy as himself, and eventually the whole concludes by the teacher telling his inattentive pupils what they might, by proper questioning, have been led to tell him; in which case (to apply a principle already alluded to), the information elicited would have been made their own to an extent which mere telling mostly fails to accomplish.

He who would avoid such disheartening failures must arrange his questions beforehand, and upon this simple plan; *the answer to each question is to be the basis of the next that is proposed.*

We have all probably noticed the progress of vegetation on the top of a country or suburban wall. At first the stones are bare, but after a while a few spores of lichen, wafted by the wind, are carried on to the wall-top, and sink into the crevices. The first shower causes these spores to germinate, and soon the grey, or green, or yellow lichen spreads a soft carpet over the surface of the stones. As it decays, its substance contributes to form a thin soil, in which the almost equally humble moss may spring and grow. The moss in turn aids in forming a soil for the fern, or perhaps even the still higher wallflower, and so the process is carried on,—

> "With coats of vegetation thinly spread,
> Coat upon coat, the living on the dead;
> These then dissolve to dust, and make a way
> For bolder foliage, nursed by their decay."

And thus each of the successive questions and answers which enter so largely into all skilful teaching forms part of an harmonious series, and is related alike to those which preceded and to those which follow it.

Some teachers, in their zeal for questioning, are apt to fall into extremes. Having been told that it is unwise to tell scholars everything, they adopt the plan of telling them nothing. They profess to accomplish everything by "questioning out." They forget that nothing can be elicited that is not *virtually* known before. The true scope of question power is as follows:—To awaken *curiosity*, or the desire to know; to awaken *memory*, or the recollection of what is already known; or to point out something *unknown*, which may be *inferred* from that which is *known*. More than this no mere interrogation can accomplish.

We have thus far reviewed, as fully as time would allow, the various agencies available by the Sunday school teacher for the instruction and training of his youthful charge. It may, however, form a fit conclusion to the present topic, as well as lead on to that which is to follow, if we now briefly notice the final act of weekly preparation—the sketching out of the future lesson, and arrangement of the teacher's private notes. We need but glance at the subject here, inasmuch as the art of teaching—the method and manner of communicating Scripture truth, will be considered at length in the third lecture, and exemplified, as far as possible, in the fourth.

The teacher who has studied the appointed portion

of God's Word in the manner already indicated, will be ready to address himself, as the week approaches its termination, to the final arrangement of his notes for use in the class. The sabbath is drawing on, but he is not now about to begin the work of preparation. He has been watchfully collecting materials throughout the week, knows all the facts embraced in the lesson, has drawn from those facts several leading truths, and has jotted down in the "pocket-book" several illustrations which the week's reading and observation have brought to light.

He now sits down, with pen, paper, Bible, and notebooks before him. But it is not for the purpose of studying. That was begun long before, and, as one of its results, he now possesses a clear and comprehensive view of the passage of Scripture to which his attention has been devoted. His present want is an equally clear and comprehensive view of the same subject as arranged for a class of given age and attainments. To this end he sits quietly down, not to *read*, but to *think*. Reflection must be called into exercise, with her cousin, Patience, to attend her. The efforts of the former may not at first be attended with success—the subject will look dim and hazy, as though out of proper focus; but with the latter's gentle assistance Reflection will soon display her power. The oft-recurring study, thought, and observation of the preceding days will bring their own reward by producing their legitimate results; and the hand of Reflection will bring the desired object into accurate focus. Newton was wont to attribute his marvellous

discoveries to his habit of constant reflection. "I keep," said he, "the subject of my inquiry constantly before me, and wait till the first dawning opens gradually, by little and little, into a full and clear light." For a while it may be that, as Mr. Blacket remarks in his invaluable manual, "nothing will present itself,"—an experience which most of us can fully endorse; but the teacher "must persevere, and think still; because it is only from intense thinking that valuable ideas spring. By-and-bye they will come slowly, then quickly, then overflow; and he must not leave off thinking till there is formed in the chambers of his mind a lineal picture of the expected conversation."

"To use a figure," continues Mr. Blacket, "he must produce from his topic a tree of thoughts,—the root,—then the trunk, branching off, as it ascends, into heavy boughs, one in this direction and another in that, —then the minor branches, each in its place,—then he must add the leafy clothing,—and not be satisfied till he has adorned it with blossoms, and adjusted the whole with so much delicacy and grace as to please the eye and bear the minutest inspection. This process cannot be called difficult. The only real effort required is that of steady contemplation."

The figure is one which will bear following out, and may serve as a convenient aid to memory in the arrangement of historical Bible lessons. The *roots* represent the *facts* of the narrative; the *stem* is an emblem of the leading truth which arises out of those facts; the *branches* the varied and far-reaching *applications* of that truth; and the *blossoms* and *foliage* the *illus-*

trations that adorn the whole. Let us devote some attention to each portion of our imaginary lesson-tree.

The Facts, or Root.—The teacher who has prepared thoroughly will, of course, have acquired possession of a large number of facts, of every degree of relative prominence and importance, and of which only a portion can or ought to be communicated to his pupils. In the selection of the leading facts, he is necessarily controlled by Scripture itself, and by the lesson-list which he is in the habit of adopting. The passage being read by the scholars in class, the surface facts, if I may so term them, cannot escape notice, even if it were desired. Nevertheless, the marshalling of these, upon which much depends, rests with the teacher; while the minor facts are almost entirely in his own hands, either to call attention to them or pass them by. In exercising this liberty, he ought specially to consider the age and sphere of thought of his scholars, choosing such incidents as embody persons and things familiar to young minds, or if this be impracticable (a rare case), choosing such as may be made familiar by illustration. This, it will be remembered, derives its importance from the principle already reiterated, that a mental picture, if it is to be afterwards recalled with ease and readiness, must be distinctly perceived, and in order to such distinctness, each part of the picture must be clearly apprehended.

Herein, I may again remark, lies the surpassing excellence of the sacred histories. While other historians describe the deeds of nations, of armies,

and of governments, the inspired writers narrate the lives and acts of individuals of all ranks and characters. The *domestic* element, almost unknown in ordinary history, predominates in Scripture. Appealing thus to our every-day conceptions and sympathies, the Bible becomes the book for home—the book for all.

But we must not digress. It is highly desirable that the teacher should keep before him the special characters and circumstances of the children who compose his class,—a knowledge of which can best be obtained by personal and familiar association with them in their several homes. Yet, since the deeper wants of each are known only to Him before whose omniscient gaze the inmost heart lies ever unveiled, what an argument have we here for humble and earnest prayer for His guidance in so momentous a duty!

You will thus at once infer that I have no faith in the desirableness of uniformity in the arrangement of lessons. I do not believe in exercises cut and dried for a whole school—turned out according to pattern, like so many regulation rifles. No two competent architects, with like materials and a like object, would erect on equal sites two precisely similar buildings; and no two competent teachers will deal with the same subject exactly in the same way; yet, just as the architects would all the while be bound by the principles and rules of their science, so must teachers be bound by the principles and rules of theirs.

The Doctrine, or Stem.—The teacher who steadily ponders the historic facts before him will soon per-

ceive that from them there springs, in each case, some leading doctrine standing between the facts and their applications, and forming the "main trunk" of the entire subject. It is, in truth, the true centre and support of every Bible class exercise: without it the facts are unimpressive and the application illogical. Its identification must, therefore, be a matter of vital importance. Indeed, it is not likely that any intelligent teacher will have proceeded far on his weekly preparation before discovering the primary truth designed to be taught in the appointed passage of Scripture. It would, for instance, be impossible not to perceive that the main doctrine to be learned from the recorded interview of Christ and Nicodemus is embodied in the words, "Ye must be born again." Yet here, again, I must be permitted to express a conviction that the chief doctrine of a Scripture narrative lesson is not invariably the same for all. The leading truth suited to one class or teacher may allowably and advantageously differ from that suited to another class or teacher. So wondrously many-sided is Scripture, that the same passage may minister to the wants of many minds and hearts which have little in common with each other. "My idea of heaven," said the suffering Robert Hall, "is rest—*rest*." "And mine," said the philanthropic Wilberforce, "is *love*." Both were right; but each looked at truth from his own standpoint. And so with teachers. After diligent study and earnest prayer, let each humbly but confidently grasp that doctrine which most forcibly commends itself to his judgment and feelings. It may not be the best

for his colleague in the next class—but it is the best for *him*.

I would urge the importance of confining the attention to one, or perhaps, in some cases, *two* leading truths, on these grounds:—That a teacher cannot do justice to more in the compass of an ordinary lesson; and that the grasp of a child's mind is at best but feeble and limited. In Nature's school, as we saw in the first lecture, the understanding gains one truth at a time, and hence learning is both thorough and pleasant. Hundreds of teachers of all kinds fail through simply trying to teach too much, and then, it may be, excuse themselves, as a young member of the profession did, by saying, "I do not for a moment expect my class to remember what I have now been telling them, as this is the first lesson upon the subject; but by repetition they will certainly master it." When will the simple truth be learnt that it is the one seed sown *in* the ground, and not the hundred cast *upon* it, which will germinate and grow?

But it may be objected, Will not such a limitation exclude many valuable reflections, and so narrow the usefulness of the lesson, by narrowing its scope? And will not that "variety," which is so peculiarly "charming" to young minds, be rendered difficult to secure, if not impossible?

To this I would reply, that the selection of one leading truth by no means excludes a passing reference to others. No wise instructor will neglect opportunities of *incidental* teaching; yet there is no necessity for deposing the main doctrine from its

prominent position, and reducing all to the same level, so as to render the whole instruction incidental. And as to variety, the *application* of any Scripture truth will yield abundant scope for the most varied illustration. It is recorded of Lord Erskine, that when a pleader at the bar, his custom was to throw all his strength into the leading points of his case, passing over those of minor importance. And doubtless this was one element of his success. No little benefit would accrue to both teachers and scholars if the same rule was adopted in Sunday school lessons, in place of the present practice, which seems to recognize no limit to the number of truths deduced, save the ingenuity of the teacher and the time allotted to the exercise. Whatever may be incidentally taught in the course of a lesson, let the main truth—the central stem—be steadily kept in view, from the commencement till the close.

I must not, however, lose sight of the fact that in the instruction of elder children the botanical figure which we have adopted will not always hold good. Ordinary Sunday school subjects rarely furnish exceptions, for whether the *title* be doctrinal or historical, the reading lesson is almost invariably a narrative, the facts of which form the roots of the class exercises in either case. But many teachers—professional teachers in particular—find it interesting and advantageous to prepare lessons of a different type, which we may call *textual;* — A verse or two, constituting a given doctrine, is selected and read or repeated by the class, and the teaching consists of explanation, illustration, and

application of that doctrine. The scholars being somewhat advanced, their knowledge of Scripture history is drawn upon for various illustrations of the truth set forth in the text, the interrogative and elliptical methods predominating throughout. For an example of a textual lesson I would refer you to pp. 48—53 of Mr. Sydenham's valuable "Notes of Lessons."* I mention this form of subject because I think its occasional adoption will be found useful by those who have charge of elder Scripture classes.

The Application, or Branches.—As the doctrine springs from the root, so does the practical application from the doctrine. As one stem divides into many branches, so one Scripture truth has manifold applications. How varied are the aspects and bearings of such truths as the omniscience and omnipresence of God, the love and mercy of Christ, the influences of the Spirit, the prevalence of temptation, the insidiousness of evil habits, the uncertainty of life, and so on! And in how many ways may a skilful teacher apply them to the consciences of his youthful charge! As with the facts and doctrines, so with the practical inferences—selection must be made in each case with a view to the characters and requirements of the taught. And so with the illustrative anecdotes and allusions with which the applied truths are adorned, and rendered more forcible as well as more attractive. No rules can be prescribed for

* "Notes of Lessons in their Principles and Application." By G. Sydenham. Longmans. Price 3s.

all cases. Careful preliminary study, steady thinking, and frequent practice, together with equally frequent review of past efforts, will not fail to render this duty of lesson-arrangement both pleasurable and easy. By sheer force of intellectual habit the teacher will involuntarily come to look at Scripture in a Sunday school light. Just as, in gazing upon some rural landscape, a geologist would be led to think of it as evidencing certain physical changes which had determined its configuration; a botanist, as a spot producing certain trees and flowers; a farmer, as a district yielding wheat or oats, turnips or mangold-wurzel; and a military man, as a locality suitable or otherwise for the evolutions of an army,—so a Sunday school teacher, when any passage of Scripture is presented to his mind, will learn to mark its capabilities of furnishing instruction to this or that grade of children, and will find it gradually shaping itself, as if by some innate power of development, into the form of a Bible lesson.

I have thus dwelt at length upon what I may term the intellectual part of a teacher's weekly preparation for his sabbath duties. Still limiting our view to this special and periodical work as distinguished from mere general preparation, allow me, in bringing this lecture to a close, to remind you in few words of that moral and spiritual fitness for teaching which is of even higher importance than that which has formed the chief subject of consideration. Inasmuch as the moral susceptibility of a child

is greater than its intellectual susceptibility; receiving, so to speak, moral impressions even more readily than mental ones—as we saw in the last lecture,—the moral influence which is brought to bear upon it becomes a matter of the utmost moment. Much salutary influence of this kind may doubtless be communicated by loving words and earnest tones; yet just as the illustration is more vivid and forcible than the abstract truth,—just as the object is more vivid and forcible than the description,—so the conduct and character are more influential than precept, however powerfully and earnestly enforced; in fact, the teacher himself is a perpetual object-lesson to his class, and lamentable must be the result when truth as described in his instructions is contradicted by truth as professedly exemplified in his conduct. What shame so deep as that of the instructor whose pupils vindicate their sins and follies by pointing to his inconsistencies? God grant us the help of His mighty Spirit, that we may "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."

The teacher must come to his class *prepared in temper and disposition:* for so surely as irritation dwells within, or anger overshadows his countenance, so surely will the moral disturbance be noted by and communicated to his scholars; they will faithfully reflect every moral perturbation as the photograph copies each spot and wrinkle. There is no sadder sight than a Christian teacher out of humour in the midst of his youthful charge. Religion has done little for him, if it has not taught him self-control;

and he who cannot govern his own temper is utterly unfit to govern a class of children. Let him learn to do the one, or relinquish the other.

He must come to his class with *full confidence in his mission.* The confidence of which I speak is as far removed from vain conceit on the one hand as it is from cold disbelief on the other. It is perfectly consistent with the lowest estimate of self; and while it "magnifies" the "office," it ascribes no merit to him who fills it. It is founded on a deep conviction that God "willeth not the death of the sinner"—young or old,—but would have all "to come to the knowledge of the truth;" a conviction that the Holy Scriptures embody that truth through the reception of which eternal life is to be gained; that the humble Sunday school teacher has a commission from on high to communicate the same truth to the young who are placed under his care, and therefore that in explaining and applying the Word of God he is literally and actually a co-worker with Him—an agent engaged in carrying out the divine purposes of love and mercy.

We have often admired the faith and constancy of Columbus in that wondrous voyage of his towards an unknown and mysterious shore. Men railed or denounced, comrades murmured and lost heart; but the great navigator held calmly on his course, fully persuaded that each moment brought him nearer to the land upon which no European had ever yet gazed. With like confidence let the faithful teacher rest assured that each sabbath lesson, if well and truly

taught, brings him nearer to the accomplishment of the great object of his toil than ever he was before.

> "Press on, press on, nor doubt nor fear,
> From age to age this truth shall cheer
> Though men may die and be forgot,
> Work done for God, it dieth not."

These moral pre-requisites for successful teaching, and that careful study and detailed preparation upon which so much has been said in the present lecture, will need to be sustained by a mightier influence than that of mere benevolent feeling towards those for whom we labour. He who would rise to the true level of his calling, and aspires to meet its just demands, must summon to his aid the power of *prayer*. Christian workers of all ranks deal too much with this mighty agency as though it were a shadowy something entirely different from all else to which the name of power is given. Prayer is as much a power in the moral world as light, heat, and gravitation are in the natural world, and yet how few Christians use the former as earnestly, industriously, and rationally as men of science use the latter! Yet when has prayer deceived him who employed it as God taught him? Never. Does the teacher feel his need of a quickening and sustaining power in his weekly studies for his class? "To pray well is to study well," exclaim Luther and Sir Matthew Hale. "I never," says the accomplished Doddridge, "advanced well in human learning without prayer, and always made the most proficiency in my studies when I had prayed with the greatest fervency." And the great composer Haydn

was accustomed to remark that nothing so well prepared his mind for musical study and composition as the act of communion with God in prayer.

Does the teacher feel that he approaches the hour of instruction with a spirit perturbed and irritated by the thousand cares and annoyances of the week? Prayer, like the harp of David, will smooth the furrowed brow, and put each troublous thought to flight. To the man of prayer it is given to have in his own breast an oratory where the noise and tumult of worldly care can never enter.

"To the heart that knows Thy love, O Purest!
There is a temple sacred evermore;
And all the tumult of life's angry voices
Lies hushed in stillness at its peaceful door.
Far, far away the roar of passion dieth,
And loving thoughts rise calm and peacefully;
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the soul that dwells, O Lord, with Thee."

Or does he feel that he is giving way to distrust, and approaching duty in the spirit of the Jewish noble, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might such a thing be?" Let him withdraw into the solitudes of devotion, and, like the angel who met the desponding prophet in the wilderness, unseen messengers shall prepare for his wearied spirit a repast, in the strength of which he shall go for many days, and do valiantly in the name of the Lord.

Looking back, dear friends, upon the many duties which have thus been set forth for your adoption, it may perhaps be asked, "How can all this be accom-

plished? Surely far less of labour and pains will suffice for such a work as ours." Nay, my fellow-labourer, surely not "far less," but rather "far more" than has been here suggested, if undying souls are to be wrested from the hydra-like embrace of sin. Only be faithful, and the power and opportunity will be given. *Rigidly redeem your time*, especially its *fragments*, and *consecrate yourself to your work*. If this work do not satisfy your ambition, choose some other which you deem of higher dignity and value. But if a Sunday school teacher, be a Sunday school teacher, "a whole man to that one thing," and fritter not away your time and energies by seeking to fill a host of other offices beside. Fixedness of purpose and singleness of aim would well nigh put an end to the dolorous complaints of want of time to prepare for the sabbath's duties. As for leisure, let us not dream of it on this side of the grave. "In this world only God and the angels can be spectators." There is an endless future to rest in. Here we have to follow Him who said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day," pursuing our glorious task till life's sun shall calmly sink into the broad ocean of eternity.

"Rest? Rest? Not till the race is run
Which yet before me lies;
Inglorious ease befits not one
Who hopes to gain the prize.
The infant on its mother's breast
May calmly, sweetly sleep,
But theirs must be no dreamy rest
Who climb the mountain steep.

"Rest? Rest? Yes, on a holier shore,
Where toil and turmoil cease;
Where present conflicts come no more,
But all is hushed to peace.
Perpetual calm shall fill this breast,
When passed o'er life's rough sea;
Oh, will not that eternal rest
Be rest enough for me?"

HOW TO TEACH;

OR,

THE RIGHT USE OF INSTRUMENTS.

HOW TO TEACH;

OR, THE RIGHT USE OF INSTRUMENTS.

We have now arrived at the fourth and final stage of our inquiry. In the two previous lectures we have considered three of the qualifications of the skilled worker—a knowledge of the *material*, of the *object* proposed, and of the *instruments* to be employed; we now approach the last division of our subject—a knowledge of the *mode of using the instruments* so as to produce the desired result. This last qualification is, perhaps, the most important of all—to the teacher in particular, as to workers in general,—as a little reflection will show. Indeed, although the adjective "skilled" has been employed in these lectures in a comprehensive sense to denote the accomplished artist or teacher, "thoroughly furnished" for his work, yet, in common phraseology, the dexterous use of tools forms the leading feature in the conception of "skill." "A *skilful* workman," says the able authoress of "English Synonyms," "understands the theory and practice of his business thoroughly;" and in this sense I have used the word, but its ordinary acceptance is more restricted. The importance of this

qualification is universally recognized. We demand that our shoemaker shall know how to make a shoe, and our tailor a coat; that the bricklayer shall understand building, and the gardener be able to rear and cultivate roses and dahlias. If they cannot do these things, we pronounce them incapable—not understanding their business—whatever other qualifications they may possess. The shoemaker may be thoroughly acquainted with the chemical changes involved in the process of tanning, and the gardener may be a scientific botanist, yet we should feel that these accomplishments could be far more easily dispensed with than a practical knowledge of shoemaking and floriculture. In other words, we are accustomed to regard it as the chief requisite in those who profess such handicrafts, that they possess the ability to practise them.

But when we come to higher departments of labour something more is required,—at least, where the workman desires to excel. If he would take a foremost place, he must not only be acquainted with rules, he must understand the principles upon which those rules are based. Thus the first-rate watchmaker must have some knowledge of astronomy and of the laws of heat and motion, and the first-rate engineer must be versed in mechanics and general physics. From such examples we learn the position and mutual relations of art and science. An art is "a collection of rules for something that is to be done," * and for the ordinary artisan it is sufficient that he be master

* Archbishop Whately.

of the rules of his trade. Art is commonly all that he requires.

But if he aims at great excellence he needs the aid of science, which is "a collection of principles for something that is to be known." * The reason is obvious. Every true art (or set of rules) is based upon some science (or set of principles), of which it is the practical application. Thus the art of dyeing rests upon the science of chemistry, the art of organ-building upon the science of acoustics, the builders' art upon architectural science, and that of the druggist upon the science of medicine. Now the rules of an art are designed to apply to all ordinary cases and exigencies; but exceptional cases and unprecedented circumstances will occur at times in every art, and the higher the art the more numerous the exceptions. Here it is that the unscientific workman feels his deficiencies. He needs a knowledge of fundamental principles, by which alone he could meet the new demand with certainty and with intelligence. Otherwise he would be compelled to resort to such expedients as occurred to him, and whether these proved successful or not would be merely a matter of chance. Let us now bring home these considerations to our own office and circumstances. Our art—the art of teaching—is founded upon the science of education, —the rules of the one upon the principles of the other. He who understands the art has made an important acquisition; but he who would be fully

* Whately.

equal to the demands of his sacred calling must not be content with mere rules, however just or valuable. He must repair to the fountain head, study the principles of education, and trace their application to his work in the form of practical rules.

In accordance with these views, I have sought first to call your attention to *child-nature* and the educational principles founded thereon. Secondly, the *matter* of our teaching has been considered, and we have together contemplated Bible truth in its relations to the young. And now, having thus noticed the MATERIAL and the INSTRUMENTS—the *taught* and the *teaching*,—we have before us the not less important subject of the Right Use of these Instruments. How shall we teach? or, more correctly, How shall we teach Scripture truth to children and young persons? The reply to this question, embodied in its most general form, would be, In *language* suited to the pupils' capacities and attainments; in a *style* adapted to the subject and audience and the design; according to *methods* based on sound educational principles, and calculated to implant the truth firmly in the understanding; and in such a *manner* as to influence the affections of the heart in accordance with the convictions of the mind.

A few plain and practical suggestions will now be offered under each of these heads.

LANGUAGE.

The amount of influence exercised by any speaker over his audience may be largely increased or

diminished by the LANGUAGE in which he clothes his thoughts.

His subject may be a thoroughly popular one, even with those whom he addresses, yet ill-chosen language may render it utterly tedious and wearisome. Who has not often heard some glorious passage of Holy Writ—a flashing jewel from the casket of Revelation—selected as a text, and then slowly dissolved in a sleeping-draught of dull verbiage, like the pearl in Cleopatra's goblet?

On the other hand, a theme universally deemed uninteresting may be presented to an audience in language so striking and judicious as to extort the confession that its dryness was only apparent, not real. Thus Archbishop Whately could make the seemingly dull principles of political economy intelligible and interesting to young lads, and Sydney Smith could assemble the rank and fashion of London to hear lectures on moral philosophy. In both cases command of suitable language was an important auxiliary to success, and the Sunday school teacher will find that in his work much depends upon the choice of words and phrases.

Our mother tongue is composed chiefly of two dissimilar elements—a Saxon and a Celtic one. To the Anglo-Saxon language we owe our monosyllables and most familiar words; the longer and more difficult words are chiefly of Celtic origin. The former impart liveliness and strength; the latter, grace and elegance; so that we may compare the two to Milton's description of our first parents:—

"For contemplation he, and valour formed;
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace."

In addressing children it is evident that the Saxon element must predominate, or we shall be unintelligible; and, speaking in an "unknown tongue," shall be "as barbarians" to them, whatever they may appear to us. The language of our English Bible and that of the "Pilgrim's Progress" are models of Saxon simplicity and vigour. We have only, for example, to compare a passage of an authorized version with some modern paraphrase or new translation to perceive at how serious a loss of plainness and power the desired amount of polish has been attained. Take, for instance, the nervous Saxon with which the 139th Psalm opens:—"O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether."

Now compare this with Dr. Blacklock's classic paraphrase:—

"Me, O my God, Thy piercing eye,
In motion or at rest, surveys,
If to the lonely couch I fly,
Or travel through frequented ways.
Where'er I move, Thy boundless reign,
Thy mighty presence, circles all the scene."

It is evidently, therefore, our duty and interest as teachers of the young, and in many cases of those

whose lot is cast in the lower ranks of the social scale, to cultivate a habit of using the plain Saxon element of our language rather than the more polished but less intelligible Celtic; inasmuch as it will aid us in the attainment of the first great *desideratum* in the art of communicating, viz. (1), *Simplicity.*

The Roman rhetorician has laid it down as a rule for the orator, that he must endeavour to speak not merely in such a manner as that he shall be understood, but so that he cannot be *mis*understood. And this should undoubtedly be our aim as instructors of youth. We must "use great plainness of speech." Yet, though no rule is more frequently reiterated than this, none is more frequently transgressed. How rare it is to read or hear a Sunday school lesson or address without noting hard words and phrases, which scarcely any child would be able to understand! And how constantly this same fault pervades our juvenile literature! That which is intelligible is apt to be silly, and that which is not silly is often unintelligible. The following rules may be advantageously borne in mind:—

Never to use a word you do not quite understand. For since you cannot make plain to others what is not plain to yourself, your pupils are not likely to gain much from hearing sounds to which even their instructor (whose vocabulary is doubtless far more comprehensive than theirs) attaches no distinct idea. I do not presume to insinuate that many teachers are likely to share the experience of a good man of whom I lately read, and who was requested at very short

notice to conduct a prayer meeting. Being quite unprepared, he opened the Bible, and fell to reading the first chapter that met his eye. Unfortunately, it proved to be a difficult one, and after floundering hopelessly in a quagmire of proper names, he came to a dead standstill before a monster four syllables long. Wiping the beads of perspiration from his brow, he at length gasped out, "Brethren, let us now turn to an easier chapter!"

Doubtless few Sunday school teachers would be embarrassed by such verbal difficulties as these, yet words are occasionally used at the school desk, the appropriateness of which is, to say the least, open to question. And the experiment is in all cases a hazardous one.

A worthy minister residing in the south of England went to enjoy for a few days the genial hospitality of a brother in the north. Among other good things provided for his refreshment were some kippered herrings. Having become agreeably and experimentally acquainted with the thing, he, in the true spirit of a disciple of Pestalozzi, inquired the precise meaning of the name, to which his hostess responded, and then—to use a legislative phrase—"the subject dropped." The visitor being afterwards invited to conduct family worship, took occasion to make use of his recently acquired knowledge, and prayed earnestly that the dear brother under whose roof they were gathered might long be *kippered* to his family and the church.

Another useful rule is—

Never to use a hard word where an easier one would

answer the purpose. This is a fault which pervades all classes, and is common to the educated and uneducated alike. It is indulged in by those who evidently would not stoop to an empty parade of empirical learning. The following passage, for instance, is said to have occurred in a sermon preached by a canon of Westminster to a country congregation, and to have been paralleled by many others in the same discourse. Speaking of the lake district, he exclaimed with fervour, "In this beautiful country, my brethren, you see an apotheosis of nature, and an apodeiknusis of the theopractic omnipotence." Medical men are peculiarly prone to this habit. A child having died the other day from the effects of a slight scratch, it was reported by the surgeon as a case of "hæmorrhagic diathesis."

It requires a strong effort at times to repress the disposition to use hard words in preference to easy ones. At the present time there is a prevalent habit among writers and speakers of interlarding their English with Latin and French phrases, to eke out the poverty of their native vocabulary, or to invest their sentences with an appearance of erudition. The late Lord Kenyon was notorious for this practice, not only in his remarks from the bench, but also in ordinary society. On one occasion King George was so annoyed at the judge's repeated unclassicalities, that he exclaimed, "Do, my lord, let us have less of your bad Latin, and more of your good English!"

The remarks of Dean Alford upon this point are just and forcible:—"Never use a long word where a short one will do. Call a spade a *spade*, not a *well-*

known oblong instrument of manual industry; let home be *home*, not a *residence;* a place a *place*, not a *locality;* and so of the rest. Where a short word will do, you always lose by using a long one. You lose in clearness; you lose in honest expression of your meaning; and, in the estimation of all men who are qualified to judge, you lose in reputation for ability. The only true way to shine, even in this false world, is to be modest and unassuming. Falsehood may be a very thick crust, but in the course of time truth will find a place to break through. Elegance of language may not be in the power of all of us, but simplicity and straightforwardness are."

As teachers, we must resist this tendency as utterly inadmissible into our class instructions. It will render us ridiculous in the eyes of our associates, though the ignorant and simple may marvel at our command of language. The only apparent exception to this rule is in the case of those technical terms which are peculiar to Scripture and theology, such as faith, justification, eternal life, regeneration, &c. Since the pupils must sooner or later become acquainted with these words and phrases, it is not desirable that the teacher should eschew their use, especially as it often requires several words to form an equivalent. But let them first be fully explained, and then, whatever they may appear to others, they will no longer be really hard words to the scholars who read or hear them. It should, however, be remembered that until the *age of reason* has arrived, these and other abstract terms can only be understood by means of an illustrative example.

Again, *avoid ambiguous words, or if they are used explain them.* Words and phrases may have two or more meanings, and no little misconception will result if the teacher uses them in one sense while the scholar understands them in another. I sometimes wonder what ideas children must form of such expressions as that, the well-known petition, "*Prevent* us, O Lord, by Thy most gracious favour," &c.; or the frequent quotation in extempore devotions, "When Thou willest, who shall *let* it?" A teacher questioning his class upon the parable of the tares and wheat, asked, perhaps rather unwarrantably, "What are tares?" To which one girl promptly replied, "*Slits*, teacher!" You have probably heard of the child who understood the passage, "There are no *bands* in their death," to signify that the persons spoken of had no music at their funerals. And I have been told of a good man who stumbled over the same apparently harmless monosyllable. Commenting on the history of Cornelius, he said he had remarked that, vicious as soldiers too often were, the bandsmen were generally even more depraved than the rest. Cornelius was therefore an eminent instance of the power of divine grace, inasmuch as he was not merely a soldier, but, as we were distinctly told, a soldier "of the *band*."

It will be well for us as teachers to keep watch over the language we employ, lest we should unwittingly implant or perpetuate erroneous ideas in the minds of our scholars.

(2.) The other requisite which I would mention under the head of Language is *accuracy*. I speak of

relative, not of *absolute* accuracy. No mere words can perfectly convey all kinds of ideas from one mind to another. They are limited by their own imperfections, and by the receptive powers of the understanding. Thus even in Scripture the conduct and attributes of the Divine Being have to be described to us in words and phrases to which a certain degree of imperfection necessarily attaches, so that it is not merely a divine decree, but a necessity of our nature, that some truths should be beyond our grasp in the present state of existence, and under the present conditions of intercommunication; "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." And probably all of us, in teaching young children, have observed how unavoidable is a certain amount of error in the language we employ, in consequence of the extremely limited range of thought and expression which characterizes such little ones.

Still we should aim at the utmost accuracy which the circumstances of each case will permit. Intelligent children are quick to detect error, and the influence of such detection on their estimate of those whose mistakes they have discovered is apparent. It is, perhaps, in general propositions that we most frequently are guilty of inaccuracy.

When no discussion is permitted, some teachers are apt to indulge in doctrinal expressions equally comprehensive and equally inaccurate. Young children are told that their hearts are like "a cage full of unclean birds"—an assertion which may well prove puzzling to young and simple minds, conveying to

them the idea of an internal zoological gardens on a small scale, and making them wonder how their hearts can possibly be so like an unpleasant aviary. Or elder ones are seriously assured that in an unconverted state they can never think, say, or do anything good in the sight of God, when perhaps half an hour before the teacher has commended them for loving and careful attention to an infant brother or sister. In all theological statements we do well to keep closely to our only standard of faith and practice. This will save us from numberless extravagances, and among them from such sweeping dogmas as the above.

As an instance of the keenness of juvenile criticism, I may mention the following incident:—A child of four years old was inquiring of its nursemaid, Did God make the trees? did He make the sun—the stars—the birds,—and so on. To save repetition, the girl replied once for all, "Yes, dear, God made everything." "He didn't," was the decided and reproachful reply. "Yes, He did, dear." "No, He didn't." Rather taken aback by this precocious piece of scepticism, she answered, "You must not talk so,—God made everything." "He didn't," persisted the child; "He didn't make *dolls!*" Many an older teacher has equally overlooked the difference between creation and manufacture.

From language we naturally pass to the consideration of—

STYLE,

which we may term the organization of language.

Not to trammel ourselves with the classification of styles adopted by some rhetoricians, let us glance at a few characteristics to be aimed at, and a few peculiarities to be avoided, in the style of teaching adopted by us in the Sunday school.

(1.) In the first place, the style should be somewhat *diffuse.* Conciseness is an excellent quality in him who writes or speaks to educated adults, but it is a fault in the instruction of children. Young minds need that the same idea should be placed in various lights, and that details should be fully presented to their imagination or understanding. As an illustration of this diffuseness, I cannot do better than refer you to the Franconia Stories of Jacob Abbott—Caroline, Stuyvesant, or Beechnut. These tales are literally all about nothing, the narrative being of the slightest possible character; but the wise educationist who penned them knew well that their detailed diffuseness, however tedious to adult minds, would commend the stories to youthful tastes. And so it has proved.

For elder children the degree of diffuseness should be reduced, but teachers rarely give their pupils too much of detail. These considerations tend to show how unwise and undesirable it is to attempt to crowd too many ideas, not to speak of different *topics*, into a single exercise.

(2.) But diffuseness must not degenerate into *discursiveness.* We are too familiar with this failing in the pulpit, on the platform, and at the school desk. Not long since I heard a preacher of some note, who, after talking on for nearly an hour, abruptly closed his

Bible with the statement that he hadn't said what he intended to say, and had said what he had *not* intended to say. I thought it a poor compliment to his hearers, and not over-creditable to himself. A discursive speaker may contrive to complete his task with tolerable success if he has an abundance of self-possession, but for an unpractised instructor the experiment is attended with no little danger. He may wander with all possible ease, but will he as readily find his way back to the starting-point? Undoubtedly digressions are sometimes allowable, but such cases are quite exceptional, and the experiment is almost always followed by loss of attention on the part of the scholars.

(3.) A *perspicuous* style should be earnestly aimed at. In the hands of some men the simplest subjects become dim and confused through a lack of clearness of style. Thus plain texts of Scripture are often mystified by commentators. And, contrariwise, the most difficult and abstruse themes may be rendered comprehensible to ordinary learners by teachers who have attained perspicuity. How well some barristers and judges contrive to explain difficult points of law to the minds of uneducated jurymen, and how perfectly the late Lord Macaulay always contrives to place a subject before his readers, is well known to us all.

To attain this important characteristic requires effort and study, but it may be said to depend chiefly on three things—clear views of the subject, simplicity of language, and naturalness of arrangement. Of the

two former I have already spoken; of the last I would observe that a natural arrangement is of great service in assisting the learner's memory. If one part of the subject treated of by the teacher be naturally connected with that which precedes and that which follows, the law of association enables the pupil to recall one by the aid of the others; whereas, if the position it occupies be merely the result of caprice, the link of connection is necessarily broken. And since logical association is stronger than arbitrary association, it is better to take up each successive portion of your subject as it presents itself to the mind, than to resort to such expedients as "three p's" or "four s's," which, though they may serve sometimes as aids to the recollection of natural divisions, should not be used as substitutes for them.

Perspicuity will be promoted by such an arrangement of matter as might naturally occur to the mind of the pupil, and, let me add, by well-marked pauses between the several divisions. The old pulpit practice of firstly, secondly, thirdly, though abused in some instances by reducing every subject to the same number of heads, and rendered wearisome in others by "twenty-seventhly," and by interminable sub- and sub-sub-divisions, was based on sound principles of instruction; and its abolition by some, through fear of being deemed antiquated, has rendered their prelections so difficult to remember, that few of their hearers are able to carry home what has been so liberally dispensed at church or chapel. A facetious old lady not long since was describing the pleasure with which she listened to

the discourses of the Reverend Mr. Blank. "I go home," said she, firmly closing her hand, "and think I have *so* much laid up for many days. But when I come to look" (unclosing her fingers), "why, there's nothing left!" And thus hearing is rewarded like the laborious efforts of a certain farmer, who, finding on the sea-shore one day an enormous quantity of jelly-fish (provincially termed "slobs"), thought that they would make excellent manure, and accordingly loaded several carts with the slimy marine stores, and took them home. What was his amazement next morning to find that the "slobs" had so effectually dissolved their corporation that nothing was to be seen but a film of white at the bottom of the carts! A like experience was related by a little school-girl, who reported concerning a gentleman who had been giving an address, "Pleathe, thir, he talked and he talked, and he thed how he loved uth, and he talked —and—and—we all thought he wath agoing to thay thomething, but he didn't thay nothing." Want of perspicuity, arising from the lack of due arrangement, and not defective power of memory, is the source of such failures of recollection on the part of hearers, whether old or young.

(4.) Teachers, I need hardly say, should cultivate a *pointed* style. This is so often urged, that one sometimes wonders why a little information is not given on the best methods of attaining this important characteristic. It would be unpardonable if I did not venture a plain hint or two.

One requisite for pointed teaching is to speak *to*

our scholars, and not *of* or *at* them; telling them, for instance, how *they* think, or feel, or act, rather than how boys or girls in general think, feel, or act. Good George Herbert describes his "country parson" as "particularizing of his speech, now to the younger sort, then to the elder; now to the poor, and now to the rich,—'This is for you,' and 'this is for you.'" Let the teacher also make good use of the second person singular and the second person plural, that each scholar may feel himself specially addressed.

Pointedness may also be promoted by bringing every subject, so far as it is possible, to bear upon youthful life and character. Mr. Stevenson, in his deeply interesting volume, "Praying and Working," gives a striking account of the labours of Immanuel Wichern in the Rough House, near Hamburgh—a sort of ragged school or reformatory,—and observes that Scripture history was there expounded with such admirable pointedness as to extort from one and another scholar the exclamation, "That's me!" as some Old Testament narrative was simply explained, and its bearings unfolded to the once degraded children. We must bring down our theology to the common every-day duties, difficulties, and dangers of the scholars ere we can hope to see religion exemplified in their every-day life. There is a lamentable deficiency in our teaching in the matter of Christian ethics, and the result is but too visible in the business and private life of too many who bear the Christian name. Much may also be accomplished in the way of pointedness by occasional and judicious questioning. I mean

that kind of interrogation which demands no verbal answer, but leads the hearer to search the depths of his own heart for a reply. Such suggestive inquiries abound in Holy Writ, and have been made blessings to thousands. *E. g.*, "What shall it profit a man?" &c.; "How shall we escape?" &c.; "If the righteous scarcely be saved," &c.; "Shall not the Judge of all the earth?" &c. A judicious teacher might in like manner address his class in the following interrogatives:—"Do you say, I will be religious when I grow old? What! delay to serve God until your best and brightest days are gone? So then, after receiving so many blessings from above, you are willing to spend the most precious part of life in the service of sin and self, and then you will offer your years of weakness and uselessness to God? What folly! what ingratitude! and what madness, too! Do you think that the King of kings will condescend to accept such an offering as that?" This example may also serve to illustrate the next and final requisite to be noticed under the head of Style, namely,—

(5.) *Vividness*, under which I include the methods of awakening in your hearers ideas and feelings corresponding with your own. Clear conceptions and accurate phraseology are powerful aids to the attainment of vividness, but these have already received sufficient notice. As a further means to this end, Mr. Blacket urges the frequent use of *interjections and exclamations*, such as those just quoted; "for," as he justly remarks, "they fire the

passages they adorn." It is a suggestive fact that the most eminent actor of the time should have declared that he would give a hundred guineas if he could say "Oh!" as Whitefield did.

That great orator possessed in an eminent degree another and perhaps the chief source of vividness—*pictorial power*. You will call to mind the oft-cited instance in which Whitefield was describing the unawakened sinner under the figure of a blind man unconsciously nearing a precipice, and with such marvellous vividness of delineation as to extort a cry of horror and alarm—"Good God! he's over!"—from one of the most distinguished and cultivated of his hearers.

I trust that the example of so eminently useful a preacher as that great revivalist will be deemed an effectual answer to the weak and foolish objection sometimes urged against such aids to impression as those of which we speak,—that they are theatrical, and therefore quite inadmissible in any sacred exercise.

On the subject of *Illustrations*, which again confronts us as pictorial power is alluded to, it will be sufficient to remind you that they should be somewhat *short* in all cases, but more so in elder class teaching than in the instruction of juniors; that they should be *simple*—not needing to be themselves explained or illustrated,—and therefore *familiar*—lying within the scope of the pupil's thoughts or observation; and *obvious*—not obscure or far-fetched in their application.

And in giving illustrations let it be remembered that their vividness will be largely augmented by presenting them dramatically, rather than in the simple narrative form. Children and less educated adults invariably narrate in this manner, and teachers of the young should avail themselves of the assistance it will afford. Nor need appropriate gesture be neglected; only that its use will necessarily be regulated by the relative position of other classes, which might suffer disturbance from their curiosity being excited by the gesticulations of a zealous and imaginative teacher. In a separate room or compartment no such obstacle will of course exist.

All narratives, descriptions, and word-pictures are also rendered increasingly vivid by the judicious use of *adjectives*. One instance will suffice,—Cowper's portrait of the woodman and his dog, in the "Winter Morning Walk," which forms the fifth book of "The Task:"—

"Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of men; to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout,
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy."

We must now turn our thoughts toward an extensive and most important theme,—

METHOD.

The term *method* may be comprehensively applied to the *general plan* of teaching, so as to include all the topics discussed in the present lecture. In this sense method is the application of the rules of teaching, as relating to language, style, manner, and all other means by which an instructor seeks to produce the desired effect upon the pupil. I here use it, however, in a more restricted sense, and intend by it to signify the *construction* or *arrangement of lessons* in accordance with educational rules.

I believe it is not too much to assert that more young Sunday school teachers fail in this particular than in any other. They cannot succeed in securing the attentive interest of their scholars, and thus their efforts are impeded and their work marred, because the truth by which alone the heart can be affected fails to reach, or reaches but imperfectly, the understanding of the child.

Perhaps the true value of method can hardly be said to be recognized by religious teachers of the young. A portion of Scripture truth is too often regarded as if it were a ball, which would roll equally well whichever point of its surface were uppermost. It might more justly be compared to an arrow shot at a mark. The bow may be strong and elastic, the arm of the archer powerful, and his aim true; the arrow straight, sharp, and well feathered; yet, if the wrong end be directed forward, the missile will fall useless to the ground. Or if this simile be deemed

too sweeping, it will at least be conceded—certainly by those who have followed me thus far—that in the teaching of children we must take measures to *awaken* before we proceed to instruct, and *instruct* before we attempt to *impress*. And since the function of the Sunday school lesson is represented with tolerable completeness by these three words—*awaken*, *instruct*, *impress*, they will of necessity suggest the leading ideas to be kept in view when the weekly "Outline" or "Notes" have to be prepared. And it would be well if each Sunday school teacher were to imitate in this respect the example of Mr. Mogridge, the silver-penned "Old Humphrey," whose custom was to place before him on his desk, when writing for either young or old, a card, bearing in conspicuous type the words, "Allure; Instruct; Impress." The question now to be considered is, By what means may this acknowledged duty be efficiently discharged in each Bible lesson? The answer is, By right *methods*. It must be obvious, at the first glance, that even if we restrict our investigation to the pure and simple Bible lesson, no single answer can be given to the above query. *Principles* are fixed; *rules* vary within certain limits; but *methods*, which are the application of rules, are susceptible of endless diversities. To say nothing of the teacher's individuality, different modes of procedure are evidently demanded by scholars of different ages, grades, and attainments, as also by their state of discipline, and their intellectual and moral condition at the given time. The form of Scripture truth also varies within certain limits, even if we look no farther than the sub-

jects comprised in our Union "List." Still there are certain *principles* (as was attempted to be shown in the last lecture) which must constantly be kept in view, and consequently certain *rules* which are of universal application. It is remarkable to notice how much two good Bible lessons will have in common, even in arrangement, although they may be designed for grades of pupils the most widely removed from each other, as I will presently endeavour to illustrate. They may differ in size, proportion of parts, and minute detail, as the oak differs from the elm, and the elm from the cedar; but the general features are the same,—root, stem, branches, and leaves are present alike in all.

Under the name of Methods, the principal varieties in the mode of communicating truth have been roughly classified as follows:—

(*a*) The Interrogative, or Catechetical method.

(*b*) The Elliptical method.

(*c*) The Lecturing, or Dogmatic method.

(*d*) The Picturing-out method.

(*e*) The Illustrative method; and

(*f*) The Demonstrative method.

(*a*) The first-mentioned, the Interrogative method, needs no definition. It is simply teaching by means of questions.

(*b*) The second, or Elliptical method, is also familiar to all teachers. It essentially consists in allowing the pupils to fill in one or more words in a sentence begun by the teacher.

(*c*) The Lecturing, or Dogmatic method, is simply

telling the pupil what is desired, without giving reasons or evidence for its truth or accuracy.

(*d*) The Picturing-out method explains itself.

(*e*) Of the Illustrative method the same may be said.

(*f*) The Demonstrative method is one in which the teacher works out with the pupil some process of proof, as a sum in arithmetic, or a problem in geometry.

Now these six methods, if I mistake not, may be virtually reduced to four. The "*picturing-out*" method appears to me to be only a form of the "*illustrative*," and scarcely distinguishable from it. The *demonstrative*, on the other hand, I cannot regard as a separate method at all, for the process of working out a proof may be conducted on various methods,—the *elliptical*, for instance, or (as I shall have occasion to show in the concluding lecture) by simple questioning. Of the above four methods, the capabilities of two, the *catechetical* and the *illustrative*, were touched upon in the last lecture. It will therefore only be necessary to notice the remaining two. Of these,—

The *elliptical* method is one which has found ardent supporters, and equally decided opponents. Some skilful teachers employ it almost to the exclusion of other methods; while others, as skilful, denounce it as encouraging intellectual laziness. We might expect that in this, as in many other contested points, truth lies in the "golden mean" between the two extremes. Let us take a brief specimen. A teacher is speaking of the prophet Jonah:—"Instead of going, as God had told him, to . . . *Nineveh*, he

immediately sets off for a seaport called . . . *Joppa*, in order to flee from . . . '*the presence of the Lord.*' He inquires if there is any . . . *vessel;* finds one about to sail for . . . *Tarshish;* pays his . . . *fare*, and goes . . . *on board.*" And so on.

Now it is evident, even from this brief specimen, that the elliptical method has several advantages;—it economizes time; it keeps up the scholar's attention; and it does not break in upon the continuity of the narrative.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the ellipsis is but a mild form of stimulant—far less awakening than the ordinary and direct question. Hence, if unduly resorted to, it is an encouragement to indolence. It is also apt to foster a habit of guessing. Its proper place is chiefly in the instruction of younger children. Elder ones, if intelligent, find it too easy, and resent it as childish; if disposed to mental torpor, their torpidity is encouraged by it. It may advantageously be used in sustaining attention while information is being communicated by the teacher in a connected narrative, as in the instance just cited, and it is also convenient in recapitulating that which has already been learned.

The *lecturing*, or *dogmatic* method, is, unfortunately, but too familiar to many Sunday school teachers. Yet it has its place and value, and it is its undue and exclusive prominence in the work of instruction which is so much to be condemned. The dogmatic teacher has all the talk to himself; he goes steadily on with

his lecture, tells all he has to tell, never pausing except to take breath, asking no questions, giving no proofs, and (when the method is practised in its purity) no illustrations, verbal or visible. We call such "a preaching teacher," but the title is a slur on the preacher's office. Preaching need not be dogmatic; dogmatism is one of its accidents, not an essential,—though I am bound to admit that it is an accident observable in a large number of cases. It would be better to term him "a *cramming* teacher," as this would indicate that his practice is rather the abuse of a good thing than the adoption of a bad one. Every teacher *must* lecture and dogmatize to a greater or less extent, but there are comparatively few who do not err on the side of excess. Two rules should be observed in order to rectify this mistake,—

1. Never tell the pupil what he may reasonably be required to tell you.

2. Never tell anything of importance without drawing the substance of it again from the pupil *in his own words*.

Although each of these methods may be easily distinguished from the others, it is right to remind you that a skilful teacher will employ them largely in combination. To speak technically, a "mixed method" will be adopted as frequently as either of the four. The *dogmatic* will be associated with the *elliptical*, and the *catechetical* with both. For such combinations no precise rules can be laid down. A clear view of the nature and use of each method, and

some experience in actual teaching, will enable the diligent worker to employ them either singly or in union, in the manner best suited to his object and circumstances.

Before passing on to consider more minutely the application of the above methods in the arrangement and delivery of Bible lessons, it may be well to notice briefly three systems of teaching with which most teachers are brought more or less into contact. I mean the *individual*, the *collective*, and the *simultaneous*. The first certainly has the merit of antiquity. The village dame and pedagogue of the olden time would have thought the critic a fit candidate for Bedlam who should have suggested the propriety or possibility of teaching more than one pupil at a time. Each boy or girl came up singly, as a matter of course, to repeat his or her lesson; and the practice prevails to a large extent even now, both in Sunday and day schools. Its radical defects would be an easy task, but I hope a needless one, to point out. The heavy tax upon the teacher's time, thought, and patience; the irregularity of the pupil's progress; the distribution of order and discipline among the unemployed, while the attention of the instructor is absorbed by the one who is saying his lesson or reading his verse, literally under his preceptor's nose; the neutralizing of the pleasures and advantages of united effort and exercise,—these are among the most obvious evils of the individual system.

Deeply impressed with the baneful influences of

individual teaching in schools, some educationists have, after the usual fashion of humanity, taken refuge in the opposite extreme. Everything is to be on the *simultaneous* principle. Children are to be dealt with *en masse*. The school is to be one great company, but *not* "limited," save by the size of the room and the lungs of the teacher. Such is the case with the Glasgow or training system, in which simultaneous answering is avowedly a leading feature. Nor have we escaped the influence of this reaction even in our Sunday schools. Large gallery classes and simultaneous exercises have been introduced among other modern "improvements." *

Modern improvements they certainly will be—especially as compared with the old individual system—provided they be used in moderation, and their limits be clearly recognized. Simultaneous utterances on the part of a class of children are not only admissible, but beneficial. But let it be clearly understood that for purposes of examination the system is almost useless. Nothing is more exciting than answers given unitedly by a large gallery class; but nothing, too, is more delusive, and for this reason,—the answers are not strictly simultaneous. As a rule, "the words of the few elder children, who alone are following the teacher, are caught up by the rest with a rapidity which an uninitiated ear is unable to detect; and the result is so cheerful a noise, that the teacher himself often believes he is instructing the whole section." *

* "Papers for the Schoolmaster," ii., 82.

The ordinary Sunday school class preserves, I think, a safe and beneficial medium. It is large enough to profit by the sympathy of numbers, and yet small enough to allow the mind of the teacher to come into contact with that of each pupil. Gallery classes have doubtless many advantages for junior pupils, but I should be sorry to see our Scripture classes enlarged in size to any considerable extent. They afford full scope for the—

Collective system of teaching, with respect to which a word or two will suffice. On this plan the scholars are instructed together, but individual answering occupies a leading place in each exercise. It is undoubtedly the most effective plan of Sunday school instruction, standing midway between the two systems already named. It interests the young by preserving the social element, and tests by appealing to individual knowledge. Faithfully carried out, it follows a principle which cannot be too often reiterated—that the true test of a pupil's having received a truth is, that he can give the substance of it *in his own language.*

MANNER.

Our next theme of contemplation must be the teacher's—

MANNER, which should be the index of the inner spirit and temper, as the face of the timepiece corresponds with the works behind it. It would be indeed a work of supererogation to dwell on the fact which all history and experience confirm, that the

manner of a writer or speaker exercises an influence equal, and in some cases superior, to that of his matter. "Manners maketh man," the old adage broadly declares, and certainly success in life is largely dependent upon outward demeanour. In preaching or teaching, manner determines to a considerable extent the influence exerted upon the *feelings* of the hearer. Of its power in a speaker no more striking instance can be afforded than in the celebrated speech of Edmund Burke, at the trial of Warren Hastings. The accused governor-general subsequently described the emotions excited in his own breast during that wondrous invective, in the following terms:—"For half an hour I looked up at the orator in a reverie of wonder, and during that space I actually felt myself the most culpable man on earth. But I recurred to my own bosom, and there found a consciousness which consoled me under all I heard and all I suffered."

(1.) It will largely contribute to the acceptableness of his instructions if the Sunday school teacher's manner be characterized by *liveliness.*

Liveliness is to the child the outward indication of inward cheerfulness and activity, as distinguished from mental dulness and sloth. And since to be cheerful and active is the very essence of child-life, those who appear to be so will secure youthful sympathy, and so prove attractive; while persons of a dull and heavy manner will seem as uninviting. Besides this, a teacher will generally have to cope with that common but unfortunate notion, so preva-

lent among young people, by which religion and religious ordinances are linked with ideas of gloom and sadness. To dispel such a misconception he must resolutely endeavour to surround religion with everything cheerful, lively, and awakening; otherwise he will rivet the link, instead of breaking it. An American writer tells a story of a boy who said that on Sundays "his grandmother used to tie him to the bedpost to keep him out of mischief while she was at church, and set him to learn the hymn which says, 'Thine earthly sabbaths, Lord, we love.'" Such methods of rendering the Lord's day agreeable to the young certainly do not prevail in the Sunday school; yet even here teachers are capable of effecting considerable improvements, if they will try; and a lively, spirited manner of speaking will go far to show that "religion" really

> "Never was designed
> To make our pleasures less,"

although to youthful eyes it sometimes looks very like it.

It should ever be remembered that a child's view of life and the world has but little in common with that of an adult. He has no sentiments like those which the poet puts into the mouth of the dying courtier-priest:—

> "An old man, broken with the storms of state,
> Is come to lay his weary bones among ye."

So far from being weary and desiring rest, there is nothing more characteristic of childhood than *un*-rest; and therefore, in presenting religion as a rest for a jaded mind, and picturing heaven as a state of calm repose, we are offering to the child for his

admiration and pursuit that which, from his very nature, he cannot but regard as unattractive. And yet Sunday scholars, both in England and America, are set to say such hymns and pieces as—

"There is an hour of peaceful rest
To mourning wanderers given;"

and—

"Here o'er the earth as a stranger I roam,
Here is no rest—here is no rest," &c.

Only a few months since, I heard a little boy, some four years and a half old, saying very prettily, "There's a sweet rest in heaven, a sweet rest in heaven, a sweet rest, a sweet rest, a sweet rest in heaven." Knowing as I did that rest of any kind was anything but "sweet" to him on earth, except at bedtime, I could not but regard it as a happy circumstance that he was too young to attach any meaning to the words he used.

I trust I shall be pardoned this partial digression; the wide prevalence of what I deem an unfortunate mistake must be my apology. I am anxious to urge that liveliness should be associated with all sabbath exercises, and that the sacred day should become to the child a time of pleasant though peculiar occupation, rather than one of *restfulness*, which his nature must abhor. Liveliness in manner will in part consist of liveliness in *tone* (as well as sprightliness in *tune*,—of which the most recent school of psalmodists have, or try to have, so genteel a horror). Young children are peculiarly sensitive to the tones of the voice, and an eminent physician has declared that a person whose voice is peculiarly harsh or disagreeable

is unfit on that account to have the domestic care of little children.

(2.) The teacher's manner must be thoroughly *earnest*.

Upon this point a few words will suffice, so much having been already said and written upon the subject in almost every address or manual intended for Sunday school teachers. It is evident from the nature of the youthful heart, as referred to in the first lecture, that if a teacher would excite earnest feeling on the part of his pupils in reference to sacred things, that feeling must be deeply rooted in his own heart, and manifested in his outward manners. Affected earnestness of demeanour will never impose upon young minds, but genuine earnestness will influence them mightily. After the death of the pious M'Cheyne, of Dundee, there was found upon his desk an unopened note, to this effect :—" Pardon a stranger for addressing to you a few lines. I heard you preach last evening, and it pleased God to bless that sermon to my soul. It was not so much what you said, as your manner of speaking it, that struck me."

(3.) And then, let the teacher cultivate a *loving and affectionate* manner.

The young, even more than their seniors, are prone to adopt the opinions of those whom they love, irrespective of the truth or falsehood of the sentiments themselves. Thus the poet says, " Children are what their *mothers* are." Let the teacher make vigorous use of this pliability, and seek " to convince them of sin, righteousness, and judgment," through the affections as well as through the understanding.

And since sincerity is as essential here as in the matter of earnestness, a Sunday school teacher who does not love his or her scholars must either learn to love them or retire from the work. Happily, this is not often the case. Most persons love children, and those who love them for Christ's sake love them the best and deepest of all. Let this affection be manifested, not repressed. Let it beam in every look, quiver in every tone, and glisten in every tear of sympathy and emotion, and, whatever outward appearances may seem to indicate, that love will not be expended in vain. As a striking example of the power of a loving manner and disposition, I need only mention the name of the late Rev. James Sherman. It is no disparagement to that excellent minister to assert that his eminent usefulness was due in large measure to that mighty instrument in the hands of God, an affectionate disposition. Hearts that remained insensible to the most cogent reasoning were ofttimes won by his tender and loving appeals, and the annals of Sunday school teaching bear ample testimony in the same direction. A loving and earnest manner is perhaps the mightiest of all the instruments which the teacher possesses within the limits of his own person and character.

I feel some hesitation in adverting to the teacher's *personal habits*, and their influence upon his pupils; yet I should be guilty of unfaithfulness to my convictions did I not remind you, though briefly, of the fact that the imitativeness of children and young

persons is almost invariably exercised in reference to the personal habits of their instructors, even when little attention is paid to their precepts. I presume that the truth of this remark will not be disputed. You will call to mind many instances within the sphere of your own observation, and I will only remind you of the striking anecdote related by Mr. Wilderspin. An infant class teacher, well qualified for his work, had unfortunately been deprived of one arm by an accident. When engaged in manual exercise with his juvenile charge, as often as he raised the uninjured arm, the stump of the other was more or less convulsed, with this remarkable effect upon the class,—the children all learned so awkward and one-sided a manner of raising the arms, that it was at length found absolutely necessary, for their sakes, to remove the teacher from his office.

And thus it is with the Sunday school worker and his habits and demeanour. Whether he be polite and courteous, or brusque and uncouth; whether attired neatly, showily, or with slovenliness; whether his conversation be frivolous or profitable; whether his general deportment be sober or flippant—whatever his ways and habits, his scholars will watch him narrowly, and probably copy him closely—too closely, it is to be feared, in anything which does *not* "become the gospel of Christ." His amusements will be noted, and a strict comparison instituted between his general teachings and his habitual deportment. Awful is the responsibility of those Christian men and women on whom the solemn judgment of our Lord may with

any appropriateness be pronounced,—"All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works."

If these numerous and varied qualifications for the right discharge of the sabbath teacher's duties, which have formed the subject of our prolonged consideration, be rightly regarded, they will serve as a stimulus to hearty devotedness and consecration, for there is much for the Christian teacher to be and to do. They will urge him not less powerfully to a continual resort to the throne of grace, that the Spirit of God may be poured out upon himself and upon his class. He will seek a double baptism,—for his own nature, that the truth he proclaims may be inwrought in his character and manifested in his life, so that they may diffuse the light of holiness, as the face of Israel's ancient lawgiver reflected the glory of the Lord; and for his young disciples, that the moral equipoise which sin has destroyed may be restored by the mighty energy of the Spirit accompanying the faithful application of truth—God and man, divine agency and human effort, uniting for the great and glorious purpose of saving and restoring the soul.

Thus, then, dear fellow-labourers, let assiduous preparation, consistent example, and fervent prayer —each in its place—be faithfully united by us into one harmonious bond of holy influence, like the three primary colours which combine to form the sunlight of heaven.

He liveth long who liveth well !
  All other life is short and vain ;
He liveth longest who can tell
  Of living most for heavenly gain.

He liveth long who liveth well !
  All else is being flung away ;
He liveth longest who can tell
  Of true things truly done each day.

Waste not thy being ; back to Him
  Who freely gave it, freely give :
Else is that being but a dream ;
  'Tis but *to be*, and not to *live*.

Be wise, and use thy wisdom well ;
  Who wisdom speaks, must *live* it too :
He is the wisest who can tell
  How first he lived, then spoke, the true.

Be what thou seemest ! live thy creed !
  Hold up to earth the torch divine ;
Be what thou prayest to be made ;
  Let the great Master's steps be thine.

Fill up each hour with what will last ;
  Buy up the moments as they go :
The life above, when this is past,
  Is the ripe fruit of life below.

Sow truth, if thou the true wouldst reap ;
  Who sows the false shall reap the vain ;
Erect and sound thy conscience keep ;
  From hollow words and deeds refrain.
Sow love, and taste its fruitage pure ;
  Sow peace, and reap its harvests bright ;
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,
  And find a harvest-home of light.

AT WORK:

THE TEACHER TEACHING.

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THE TEACHER TEACHING.

The brief outline which has been given in the preceding lectures, of the *material* upon which the Sunday school teacher is called to operate, and of the *instruments* he employs, and the general rules which must regulate their use, cannot be regarded as complete unless at least some attempt be made to present a view of the *teacher at work* in his sabbath class.

We have noted a few leading educational principles arising from the mental and moral constitution of children; we have glanced at the Bible as the great instrument of religious instruction; at the conditions necessary for its suitable presentation to the understandings and hearts of youth; and at the chief qualifications which characterize the skilled teacher. Let us now endeavour to illustrate the practical application of these rules and principles, and view the worker as actually engaged in his delightful task. The general course of a Sunday school Bible lesson will be the subject of discussion; and remembering, as already hinted, the diversities of which such an exercise is susceptible, it will not be expected that

any precise model or pattern will be offered. The lecturer will merely attempt to show how Bible lessons may be given to young people agreeably to the principles and rules already laid down.

Let not the diligent teacher hesitate to take with him into his class the written "notes" which he has previously sketched out. They will prove as helpful as printed notes are embarrassing, and they will tend to raise him in the good opinion of his pupils as much as question-books and periodicals tend to lower him in their esteem. They will check discursiveness, aid the memory, and promote the due distribution of the several parts of the exercise, so that each shall have its allotted share of time, and no more.

And now, having lingered long, but I hope not idly or unprofitably, on the threshold, let us follow the worker to the post of responsibility. Thoughtful and prayerful, he enters upon his pleasant task. What is his first duty?

The following recommendation, found in a tract which attained some degree of popularity thirty years ago, will probably meet with a very qualified degree of approbation on the part of modern educationists:—

"*Before you begin teaching, show your authority as a ruler.* Your commanding attitude must now convince the children that you are not to be trifled with. Your firmness as a governor, and your importance as an instructor, must now be seen, felt, and respected. To prevent interruption, leave the bottom of the class vacant for the late comers. Presuming that your

class, by this method, is held in perfect order, you now wait for the superintendent's command,— 'Begin teaching;' then smile with benignity on your scholars, and commence the work of instruction."

"Benignant smiles" and "commanding attitudes" would prove, I fear, a rather awkward combination.

Neither will a wise teacher set his pupils at once to "read round;" though this, through mere thoughtlessness, is no uncommon practice. What possible benefit or what possible meaning can Bible truth so received convey to the mind of the scholar, when the Book of God is used as a sort of Riot Act to quiet turbulence and restore order? And what views of the sanctity of that divine epistle will children be likely to form when they are taught to approach it in a careless and irreverent spirit? Not much more exalted opinions, I fear, than those acquired by the boy whose ears have been literally made to tingle by the outward and visible application of a pocket Bible wielded by the hand of an irascible teacher! The time for taking up the sacred volume will not always be the same. Let the scholars read when the subject has acquired interest enough to make them wish to do so, and not before. In the first instance, there is only one legitimate course to pursue. As was intimated in a former lecture, attention can neither be begged, nor enforced, nor extorted; but it is to be won, like many a strong city, by skilful strategy. The scholars must be interested, and where interest enters, inattention and restlessness take flight and disappear like night-shadows at the rising of the sun.

And how shall interest be secured? The question has already been answered, since it has been shown, when speaking of a child's intellectual and moral powers, that we have only to call one or more of these into active exercise, and direct it into a suitable channel, and the interest arising from agreeable occupation is at once excited. Thus we may appeal to one of the senses, as when we exhibit an object to a class of infants; or we may excite an intellectual faculty —as conception or imagination, by a word-picture or lively supposition; or both sense and intellect combined, as when we show a painted picture of familiar objects; or we may awaken memory or stimulate reflection by a well-chosen question or observation. By such means as these, and many others beside, the teacher may arrest the volatile attention of his young pupils.

A Bible lesson, therefore, needs an INTRODUCTION designed to arouse the interest of the scholars, and prepare them for the due reception of that which is to follow. The characteristics of a successful introduction are consequently twofold.

(1.) *It must awaken attention by exciting mental activity.*

A well-timed question will often accomplish this, as I have just remarked; but in the case of young children I have sometimes found it insufficient for the purpose, owing to their extreme volatility. On the whole, therefore, I prefer a brief and familiar illustration—visual, anecdotal, allusive, or otherwise—as the most suitable form of introduction for all grades.

It is always acceptable, and rarely ineffective. Let the subject be Christ and Zaccheus. An infant class teacher might begin by producing a picture of a sycamore tree; an elementary class teacher describe some public occasion on which he had seen boys climbing up lamp-posts and railings to see the Queen pass by; while in an elder class an historical reference to the miraculous capture of Jericho by Joshua, and the curse which rested on its rebuilder, &c., might fitly introduce the scene of the events to be considered.

But such illustrations must be limited by an important condition; for an introduction should—

(2.) *Lead naturally on to the teaching which follows.*

Every one has read of the old preacher who, finding his discourse was producing a soporific effect upon his congregation, suddenly paused; and then as suddenly shouted out, "Last Monday morning a man was hung at Tyburn!" Having thus effectually woke up his drowsy flock, he quietly proceeded with his discourse. This was undoubtedly a stimulative illustration, but unhappily it was somewhat far-fetched, and must have certainly appeared a little out of place. Whatever may have been the case with his congregation, a youthful audience would probably have soon relapsed into their former torpid condition. The teacher of children must remember that unless the introductory illustration leads naturally to the subject of instruction, the interest excited will speedily die away. The Hindoos have an ingenious expedient for inducing refractory elephants to enter a ship when it is desired

to transport those unwieldy beasts of burden from place to place by water. A sort of raft of boats is constructed, extending from the shore to the vessel, and over it they place earth and grass, so as to look as much like terra firma as possible. The unsuspicious animals proceed onward, and discover only when too late to retrace their steps, that they are traversing a more yielding element than the solid land. By an equally skilful and admissible artifice a class of children may find themselves fairly entered upon the subject of teaching almost before they are aware that the introduction is at an end.

Close upon the introduction will sometimes follow that very important department of a Bible lesson, the RECAPITULATION. This at least will be the case when a series of connected subjects is being dealt with, as is mostly the practice in well-ordered Sunday schools. Having gained attention and introduced the subject, the next step is to link on the new information to that already acquired—to show the connection of the new subject with that which immediately preceded it. This is essential to the firm establishment of the lesson in the scholar's memory, since, as we have seen, association is the basis of recollection, or, to quote the words of Mr. Fitch, "The mind always refuses to receive, certainly to retain, any isolated knowledge. Try, therefore," he adds, "to establish, in every case, a logical connection between what you teach and what your pupils knew before." Where the lessons have no such serial character, the intro-

duction may be made to serve the purpose in view, linking the new subject to something already familiar, by virtue of its illustrative element. Thus the disobedience of Jonah, given as an isolated lesson, might be introduced by some anecdote of a truant schoolboy trying to hide himself from observation. And such a course becomes necessary whenever wide gaps occur in a chronological series of narrative subjects. As illustration is to be recommended as a preferable method of introducing a lesson, so the *interrogative* or the *elliptical* method, or a combination of both, is the best for recapitulation. This exercise must not be allowed to grow prolix or wearisome. It should be short, lively, and pointed. The probe should be used with rapid and unwavering decision, whether the effect be cheering or otherwise to him who wields it, whether distinct recollection or blank forgetfulness of the preceding lesson, on the part of the pupils, be thereby manifested.

We now come to the main teaching, to which I have given the somewhat inadequate title of the EXPOSITION. I use the term not in its homiletical acceptation, as when we speak of an "expository preacher," but in its literal sense, to indicate the "placing-out" or unfolding of truth to the comprehension of the scholar. It includes the due presentation of the *facts*, and the deduction of the leading *doctrine* or doctrines.

Here it is that a teacher's individuality will have full play. Here is room for varied methods and

endless combinations. And here, in consequence, is felt especial difficulty in laying down formal rules for the instructor's guidance.

Yet the truth with which he is about to deal must fall under one of two heads,—that which the scholars already know, and that which they do not know. Truths of the former kind have to be developed, elicited, or drawn out; truths of the latter kind have to be supplied; for *information* cannot be developed, though *ideas* may. In treating the former class, we use the *question* and the *ellipsis;* in treating the latter, we employ the *lecturing* or the *illustrative* method.

Now, in ordinary class teaching the pupils are generally in possession of a considerable amount of knowledge on the appointed subject, either previously acquired, or (in Scripture classes) at once available by reference to the open Bible. And just as their knowledge of the *previous* lesson has been elicited in the *recapitulatory* exercise, so their acquaintance with the *present* lesson should be likewise elicited by the aid of questions and ellipses. Here it is that most young teachers fail—neglecting, so to speak, to draw upon the capital stored up ready for their use. Hence the almost exclusive employment of the *dogmatic* method, much to the disadvantage of the pupils, as well as of their instructors.

The exposition will in general be treated by a skilful teacher in a more or less catechetical method, according to the ages and attainments of his scholars.

Thus, in an infant class lesson, the exposition will be conducted chiefly on the *illustrative* and *dogmatic*

methods (the illustrations being partly *visual*), with frequent use of *questions* and *ellipses* to sustain the attention and interest of the children.

In the *elementary* division, the chief method will be the illustrative—especially that form of it which is by some writers elevated to an independent position as the "picturing-out method," the illustrations being *verbal* only. Almost equal use will be made of the *interrogative* method, with occasional employment of the *elliptical*.

In the *Scripture* division, the exposition will generally assume the form of a catechetical conversation; the *interrogative* method being aided by the *illustrative*, while the *dogmatic* and *elliptical* are sparingly resorted to.

But varied as these combinations evidently are—and it is well that such variety of treatment is attainable—the exposition of a Bible lesson, whatever the pupil's relative position, will consist, as remarked just now, of the *unfolding* of certain facts, and the *deduction* of some truth or truths which the facts embody.

Our next inquiry, therefore, is, How may the facts of sacred Scripture be best unfolded to youthful minds?

1. In the first place, *difficult words, phrases, or circumstances will have to be explained.*

Let us glance at a few forms of explanation:—An explanation may be (*a*) *verbal*, (*b*) *analogical*, (*c*) *pictorial*, or (*d*) *demonstrative*. Suppose the subject to be explained is the Jewish custom of reclining at meals.

(*a*) One teacher says in a matter-of-fact way, "The Jews adopted the custom of reclining on couches, the ends of which were placed against the table bearing the provisions." This is a *verbal* explanation. It is manifestly somewhat dry, and is chiefly to be used in elder classes, when time presses, or the point is not of material importance.

(*b*) Another teacher asks, "Have you a sofa in your parlour at home?" "Yes, teacher." "Well, if you were to put one end of the sofa against the table at dinner-time, and then go and lie upon the sofa, and lean over the end so as to reach your plate, you would be doing very much as the Jews did when they had their meals." This would be an *analogical* explanation—admissible and interesting at all times to a juvenile audience.

Care, however, is needed in the use of both verbal and analogical explanations, lest they fail of their object, and darken instead of illuminate. The language should be studiously simple, free from technicalities and words of double meaning. Even common words which, though differently spelt, have the same sound, will sometimes mislead the young hearers. A minister was once appealed to to solve the following difficulty:—"Sir, said the inquirer, you often speak about our *fore*fathers. You tell us that their names were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But they are only *three*. Please, sir, who was the *fourth?*" Nothing, too, can be more evident than that an explanation should be couched in simpler words and phrases than that which is explained. Yet the following

extract from Mr. Gall's "First Initiatory Catechism" will show how readily even skilled teachers may fall into an opposite course:—On the answer to Question 1, "God at first created all things to show His greatness," he remarks, "He (the pupil) should be able to explain that the first word means 'the Almighty;'—that the words 'at first' here signify 'at the beginning of time;'—that 'created' means 'brought into existence;'—that the term 'all things,' as here used, indicates 'all the works in nature, with their inhabitants;'—that the phrase 'to show' means 'to exhibit to His rational creatures;'—and that 'His greatness' at the close implies 'His infinite majesty and perfections.'" Now, I think you will agree with me, that the young child who could *not* understand the original answer would stand small chance of comprehending the explanation; and that the child who *could* clearly explain the latter would be a fit subject for exhibition in a museum.

Care is also needed in analogical explanations lest the scene, or event, or phenomenon which is used as an instrument of explanation be as difficult as, or more so than, the circumstance or incident explained. Thus, it would not do to explain the Jewish custom just now alluded to by referring a class of children to the habits of the citizens of Pompeii, as evidenced in the sculptures of that disentombed city, of which the pupils might never have heard even the name.

Neither must the teacher, in trying to elucidate an abstract idea, such as faith, justice, &c., allow his pupils

to imagine that an analogical explanation is equivalent to a definition—as in the case of the children in the well-known anecdote, who understood "faith" to be a "mutton pie in a boat," mistaking, through the unskilfulness of the teacher, the details of the explanatory allusion for a definition of the thing itsef. In such cases, and in all where an explanation is communicated, examination must follow to prove whether the idea has been grasped or not.

(*c*) A *pictorial* explanation is one in which an actual representation is given of the desired object or circumstance. In using these the picture should be put aside as soon as it has accomplished its purpose. It is not often needed in elder classes.

(*d*) A *demonstrative* explanation is often impracticable or undesirable. I remember a simple-minded tradesman relating how on one occasion he asked a celebrated wrestler to explain a particular kind of throw, and received in reply a twist of the ankle, which placed him *hors de combat* for a fortnight. Where, however, no such practical objection exists, this form of explaining is sure to be telling and popular, especially with junior scholars. A striking gesture will often be the means whereby truths are recalled which would otherwise have been forgotten. The teacher here dramatizes instead of describes. To revert once more to our former illustration, a teacher who had a room to himself and pupils might, by the aid of a couple of chairs, clearly and forcibly show how the Jews reclined at meals. To this class we may also refer explanations given by the aid of maps.

I have thus attempted to show how explanations may be supplied by the teacher in cases where he must of necessity play the part of elucidator. But, upon principles already familiar to you all, it is manifestly desirable, and is in many cases by no means difficult, that the pupils should find out for themselves that which is sought after—the teacher putting them upon the right track, and leading them step by step to the discovery of truth. He who gives a skilful explanation *teaches*, and does much; but he who shows his pupils how to reach the explanation themselves *trains*, and does more, in proportion as training is superior to teaching.

Let us see how an explanation may be reached by the help of questions. Then passing on to the other parts of an *exposition*, we shall probably find the question equally important and influential. Take the following example of catechetical explanation. It is slightly altered from Mr. Sydenham's "Notes of Lessons." The teacher wishes to explain what a "vision" is, and first requires a definition of a dream. But to the question, "What is a dream?" he gets no answer. He proceeds thus:—"See how hard that little boy is working at his sums. What would you say his mind is doing?" *He is thinking, teacher.* "And what are you doing all the day long?" *Thinking.* "Yes; and is your thinking confined to the daytime, or not?" *No; we think in our sleep.* "When you think much during the night, what do you say you have been doing?" *Dreaming, teacher.* "In what state are you when you are dreaming?" *Asleep,*

teacher. "Then what is dreaming?" *Thinking in our sleep.* Observe with what slight aid from any other method, and that only at starting, a clear and satisfactory explanation is here obtained by questioning.

2. A second duty which will fall under this department of a Bible lesson is *description.* The teacher will have to describe the scenes and incidents of Scripture history, and with a minuteness and speciality proportioned to the relative prominence of each in the lesson, and to the juvenility of his hearers. The power of minute and accurate description is, as we saw in the last lecture, a most important acquisition, and a powerful source of attractiveness. The pre-requisites for its attainment have already been fully pointed out.

In description, the *illustrative* method will of course predominate; but the *catechetical* and *elliptical* methods may accompany it with advantage. The latter is of especial use in keeping up the attention of young children while a word-picture is being drawn.

3. A third duty which must be undertaken during the *exposition* of a Bible lesson is that of *developing ideas.* We call this, sometimes, "working out the lesson," and sometimes with Mr. Stow we call the process "training out" the ideas suggested by what we are reading. As a process of training or mental exercise, it forms, perhaps, the most important department of a lesson. Here, if anywhere, we lead the scholars to think about the subject before them,—to exert that power of mental assimilation without which truth can never become a part of themselves.

And since, as might be expected, the *question* is the chief stimulus to such mental exertion, the need for catechetical teaching at this stage can hardly be too fully realized, or the proper questions too carefully prepared. I would also remark that, as nothing is so provocative of mental activity as right questioning, so nothing is so stupefying as mere mechanical interrogation, such as may be found in many question books. Of this truth Mr. Curwen has given an amusing illustration. He relates that, when a young teacher, he sat down in a class of boys who had been trained in this slavish style.

"*Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve*" was the sentence carefully read round the class.

"Well, my boy, who was the father of Cain?" "Abel, sir." "No, no; who were the father and mother of Cain and Abel?" The boy seemed doubtful. He was really doubting which word he should "guess" for an answer. I was forbidden to tell. So I asked question after question. "Who are the father and mother of this boy next you?" "John —— and Mary ——." The boy felt encouraged. "Now, who were the father and mother of Cain and Abel?" The expression of distress and hesitation fell again on his countenance. At last I thought I should make it plain. "Well, then, who are your father and mother, boy?" All at once a bright look came upon him. He seemed confident that he had got the right answer; and raising one hand to the top of his head, he almost sang out a text he had learned somewhere,

—"I have said unto corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother."

As an illustration of an opposite kind, let me quote from one of Plato's Dialogues the sequel to a passage with which you are no doubt familiar, in "The Art of Questioning." A short conversation on geometry is there recorded, in which Socrates and a little slave-boy are the principal speakers. The philosopher draws a square on the ground with his stick, and asks the lad how long would be the side of a square twice as big as the one drawn. The boy thinks it ought to be twice as long. Socrates soon demonstrates the error, and shows that a side twice as long makes a square *four* times as great. The boy at length confesses that he does not know. Allow me to quote the succeeding portion of the conversation, in which the lad is trained by a master-mind to discover the desired truth. Attention is called to the diagram again, and Socrates asks,—

"If in this new square, which is made up of four of the old squares, we draw four diagonals, so as to cut off the four outside corners, each of these diagonals will cut each of these squares—how?—*Boy.—Into halves.*

"And you already know that these four diagonals will be equal, and will form another square?—*Yes; I know.*

"And of what part of the four squares is this inside square made up?—*Of the four inside halves.*

"And four halves are equal to what?—*To two wholes.*

"Then we have got a square that is equal to how many of the original squares?—*To two of them.*

"And it is a square upon what line?—*Upon the line that divides the original square into two halves.*

"That is, upon its diagonal?—*Yes.*"

Does any one suppose that, after such a lesson as this, the learner would ever fall into the same error, or fail to remember the truth thus developed by questioning?

This development of ideas by catechetical exercise will not of course occupy an equally prominent place in a class of young children to that which it will hold in classes of boys and girls who have arrived at the age of reason or reflection; yet it must never be dispensed with any lesson given to any class whatever. Like picturing-out, it finds a place in every educational exercise, and both teacher and pupils will suffer if it be disused.

4. There is another duty which claims mention here—*the refutation of error.*

Socrates was, as you are aware, a great questioner, yet his efforts were chiefly directed to the exposure of error rather than the communication of truth, inasmuch as he considered false knowledge to be the great obstacle to the reception of the true. And undoubtedly this is a task too often neglected by religious teachers, although the necessity and importance of grappling with error directly rather than indirectly may be overrated. Children and youth acquire strange prejudices, and fall into strange errors; and at times it is well not only to detect, but

also to refute them. Here again the question comes into play, for there is no method so sure to produce conviction as when a person is led by catechizing to confute himself. Beside which, it is often the only means of bringing mistakes to light, and the teacher discovers some singular misconception where he thought to find accurate knowledge.

To show, on the other hand, how skilful questioning may be employed to lay bare an erroneous opinion, allow me to give a short example, based upon an illustration in Bastiat's "Political Economy." The supposed fallacy is, that "breaking windows makes good for trade," or in other words, "If nobody broke windows, what would become of the glaziers?" Let us take a case: — A mischievous urchin sends a stone through the shop window of Smith, the pastry-cook. Smith is savage; the neighbours compassionate. One after another drops in, and after an indignant denunciation of the missing juvenile, ends with the remark, "Well, you know, it makes good for trade. If nobody broke windows, what would become of the glaziers?" Let us look at the matter closely. Suppose the cost of replacing the broken window amounts to five shillings, and that Putty, the glazier in the next street, is called in to perform the job. Now whom do you say is benefited by the broken window? *Putty.* To what extent? *Five shillings.* Very good. But let us suppose the window had *not* been broken; what would have been the effect on Smith? *He would have saved five shillings.* And what would probably have become of those five

shillings? *He would have spent them in some other way.* Yes; say on a book at Vellum's, over the way. Well, then, who would have been the gainer in that case? *Vellum.* To what extent would trade have been benefited? *To the extent of five shillings.* How much did you say it was benefited by the breaking of the window? *Five shillings.* Then what is the advantage of breaking windows over not breaking them? *None at all.* Now let us go back to Smith. The window being broken and replaced, what does Smith get for his money that he did *not* have before the accident? *Nothing.* If it had not been broken, but the money spent at Vellum's, what would Smith have gained? *A five-shilling book.* Then, putting all the facts together, is the breaking of a window a gain or a loss? *A loss.* A loss of what value? *A loss of the value of the window.* Yes. Remember, *destruction is not profit.*

5. The next and final part of an exposition in a Bible lesson is the *deduction of doctrinal truths* — the drawing out of one or more leading principles embodied in the facts expounded, described, and thought upon. If the preceding exercises have been duly worked out, this deductive process will be a perfectly natural one. Be it remembered, it is to be performed by the scholars, rather than by the teacher. He may lead them to it, but it is they who should actually draw out the truth or truths. If he has done his duty well, he will not have to address his class in such words as, "Now, I want to show you the doctrine to be taught by the history we have been reading," for all the previous

portions of the lesson will have been so many steps towards this very point. As an almost universal rule, telling must be avoided here. If the pupils do not perceive the doctrine involved, either they have been inattentive, or the teacher has failed in method.

Take an illustration from a lesson on "Absalom's rebellion and death." The facts having been unfolded and discussed, and the children examined upon them, the teacher proceeds to bring out the main truth embodied in the narrative, using of course the *catechetical* method.

"What became of Absalom? (I omit the answers, as they are so obvious.) With whom had he been fighting? What led him to rebel against his father? By whom was he joined? What became of them? What was the consequence of their wickedness? Who received punishment? What lesson should we learn from it? Yes; and this lesson is beautifully given in the Book of Proverbs in the following words, which I would have you all remember, 'Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished.' Repeat them;—again."

And now, having indicated the general nature of the INTRODUCTION and EXPOSITION of a Bible lesson, let me urge a faithful performance of that oft-forgotten or imperfectly executed duty—*examination*. The teacher must ascertain what his pupils have learned; how far his teaching has been really received into their understandings; and, therefore, how far they are prepared for its application to their hearts and

consciences. A short, lively catechetical exercise should generally follow each division of the lesson—sometimes even at the end of the *introduction*, but almost always at the close of the *exposition*—before the doctrinal truth is deduced. But it is often convenient and agreeable, when the exposition consists of several distinct portions, to examine at the close of each.

Without this process, this teaching-guage, we can never tell whether or not we have been fully understood. We may feel persuaded that our pupils know all about the lesson, when perhaps in some important respects they have quite failed to catch our meaning. Mr. Vanderkiste, in his "Six Years' Mission in the Dens of London," relates an anecdote which strikingly illustrates this point, and for which I am indebted to a little tract by the Rev. Dr. Steel. "A young missionary, who accompanied Mr. V., was requested by him to instruct a poor sick man whom they visited together. The new missionary gave a clear and correct account of man's fallen condition, his need of salvation, and the way to obtain it, and then read a chapter in the Gospels in proof of what he had been advancing. The poor man listened attentively, and when the missionary said 'You know,' or any other such interrogation, he replied, 'Certainly, sir,' or 'In course, sir.' 'My companion appeared pleased with the man's attention to instruction, and I thought it time to undeceive him. 'Mr. ——,' said I, 'my friend has been taking much pains to instruct you, and now I will ask you a few questions. Do you

know who Jesus Christ was?' 'Well, no,' said he, after a pause; "I should say that's werry hard to tell.' 'Do you know whether He was St. John's brother?' 'No, that I don't.' 'Can you tell me who the Trinity are?' 'No, sir.' 'Are you a sinner.' 'Oh, certainly, sir, we are all sinners.' A pause. 'Have you ever done wrong?' 'Why, no, I don't consider as ever I have.' 'Did you ever commit sin?' 'Why, no, I don't know as ever I did.' 'But do you think you're a sinner?' 'Oh, certainly, sir, we're all sinners?' 'What is a sinner?' 'Well, I'm *blest* if I know rightly; I never had no head-piece.'"

Nor let the teacher forget that in examination answers should be required from individual scholars, rather than from the whole class collectively.

The exposition being now closed, and its great purpose answered in a clear recognition of the leading moral and spiritual truths, the APPLICATION of those truths, or of that single truth, to the case of the pupils themselves naturally follows. When their minds have grasped the facts in their scope and detail, and realized the doctrine they exemplify or embody, then, and not till then, are they prepared to apply it to their own individual characters and circumstances. We say, apply it themselves, for it is of no little consequence that they should perform the duty, and thus become their own monitors and counsellors. "*I* ought to act thus" is always more powerful than "You ought to act thus." Allow me

to remind you how prominently this appears in such of our Lord's recorded teaching as partook of a conversational form. Take one instance—your recollection will easily supply others. The parable of the wicked husbandmen has been related by our Lord: His hearers are deeply interested in the facts. The Great Teacher asks, "When therefore the lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" At once they answer, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render to him the fruits in their season." "Did ye never read," is the solemn and confounding rejoinder, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?" How could an application be evaded after such an inquiry as that?*

This divine illustration may also serve as a sample of a suggested application by means of pointed questioning.

Every teacher will, I am sure, acquiesce in the remark that in no part of a Bible lesson is the attention of the scholars so liable to flag as in the application. The exercise is evidently dry, the children are getting tired, and the teacher is pained to find them growing fidgety and restless just when he is attempting to press home important truth. How may this be prevented? I believe it may be prevented to a large extent by judicious *illustration* of the applied lessons. The leading doctrines having been deduced, the teacher supposes a scholar placed in certain circumstances, and asks what ought to be

* See "The Teacher's Model, and the Model Teacher."

done in view of the doctrine just elicited. Having obtained an answer, he may illustrate the practical truth by relating some anecdote suitable to the case in point. Thus sustaining interest by illustration, he secures attention for the words of earnest expostulation which will probably follow. The illustrative method will thus be combined with the interrogative. Ellipses may also be used in junior classes. Thus our obligation to Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for us, may be one of the doctrines deduced. The teacher applies it thus:—"How ought we to feel, dear young friends, towards Him who has done so much for us?" "We ought to love Him—to be grateful to Him," are among the replies. "Yes; and to feel nothing to be hard which we can do to show our gratitude. It is related of Montesquieu, a French philosopher, that conversing one day with a boatman, he found that the poor man was trying to save up a sum of money to ransom his aged father, who had been taken prisoner by pirates. Some time after this the father appeared at his son's door—the ransom had been paid, and he was free! The boatman knew who had paid it, but did not know the stranger's name. But he vowed that he would spend years—even all his life, if necessary—in trying to find him, that he might fall down at his feet and thank him. You do not wonder that the poor man should speak and act thus. But what did he owe to the generous stranger compared with what we owe to Christ, our Great Deliverer? The Frenchman gave some of his money to deliver a poor man from slavery; but Jesus

gave—what money? Himself—His own life—His precious blood—to set us free from the slavery of Satan and sin. Is it too much for Him to ask the love of our hearts and the service of our lives?"

But I will not prescribe stereotyped modes of application. I merely wish to point out a means of rendering this often irksome, yet vitally important, part of the teacher's duty more interesting, and therefore more impressive. It is here that the power of the teacher's moral and spiritual condition and character will be felt; it is here that the earnest Christian, who has himself tasted of the heavenly gift, and felt the power of the world to come, will cause the hearts of his scholars to beat in unison with his own, and stamp upon the plastic nature of childhood the seal of his own living faith, glowing love, and genuine holiness. Here, if anywhere, loving earnestness will sparkle in his eye and tremble on his lip as he entreats his youthful charge to a course of life and conduct in accordance with those truths of which they themselves have already perceived the reasonableness and importance. This is the crisis of the lesson in its moral and spiritual aspects. The pupils may thoroughly understand the facts, and even clearly recognize the meaning of the doctrines embodied therein; but unless they realize the practical and individual application of these facts and doctrines to their own personal characters, "the word"—even though it be the word of God—will prove (at least for the time) "unfruitful."

Not many months since, the teacher of a female

senior class remarked to me, "I have just had a conversation with one of my scholars. I consider her truly decided for God, and yet I had no idea she was even impressed with the truth." It appeared that this young person had been arrested by a lesson in which the teacher had taken occasion to point out the personal application of the Saviour's atonement to each and all of her class. "I had attended a place of worship," she said, "for years. I knew that Christ was the Saviour, and that He died for sinners; and yet I never realized until that afternoon that He died in *my* stead, and for *my* sins. It was like a new world opening upon my view."

And this is the kind of teaching we need—teaching which applies the truths of the gospel not only to children in general, but to the particular class, and to each member of it individually—the "faithful and wise steward" giving to each of the household his portion "in due season."

The following Outline is appended with the view of indicating by a connected example, as I have already indicated in a more fragmentary form, the general arrangement of a narrative lesson given to a *Scripture class*. It will be found to exemplify the principal features of such an exercise, as sketched in the present lecture, and also, I trust, to harmonize with the principles and rules laid down in preceding ones.

Outline of Lesson.

Subject—Christ and Zaccheus, Luke xix. 1–10.

I. Introduction and Recapitulation.

1. *Mixed method.*—You will remember our speaking, not long ago, about a very remarkable siege. *The siege of Jericho, teacher.*

What kind of place was Jericho? Situate near to what river? On which side of the river? In the road to what city?

From whom was Jericho taken? Into whose hands did it fall? By whom were the victors commanded? What did they do to the city? What did Joshua say about the rebuilding of Jericho? Then was it ever rebuilt? When, and by whom? (Refer to 1 Kings xvi. 34.)

I think you will by-and-by agree with me that our lesson this afternoon tells of a victory as great as that which the Israelites gained at Jericho, although not so terrible; and it was won almost, if not quite, on this same spot.

But tell me, first, what was the subject of our conversation last Sunday afternoon? *The parable of the labourers in the vineyard.*

Do you remember where we supposed that parable to have been delivered? *At a city called Ephraim.* Now refer to Matt. xx. 17, 18, and you will see what followed. To what city did our Lord resolve to go? For what purpose?

And yet although he knew all that was before Him—all the sorrows and sufferings that were to come upon Him in the course of a few days, He could yet think of blessing and doing good during that short time. Turning aside from the direct road to Jerusalem, He took the road to the famous city of palm trees, called (*Jericho*). And here Jesus performed two great works. The first was the healing of two poor blind beggars. The second was a work of a different kind, about which we will now read. *Verses read.*

2. *Examination* (*interrogatively*).—When our Lord left Ephraim, where did He say He was going? Did He go directly to Jerusalem? Where then? What miracle did He perform at Jericho?

II. EXPOSITION.

1. *Explanation*, ver. 1, 2 (*interrogatively*).—Who is mentioned here beside our Lord? Have you read anything about Zaccheus in other parts of Scripture? No, this is the only time he is spoken of. What was his office? Whom do we mean when we speak of "publicans" now-a-days? Was Zaccheus a publican of that sort? Then what was the nature of his occupation?

(If the scholars do not know, the teacher may simply impart the desired information; but it will be better, inasmuch as they probably understand the nature of taxes and tax-collecting, to develop that knowledge, and then supply the merely verbal explanation which they are unable to give; thus—Persons who occupy houses have to pay money for the use of them. What is that payment called? *Rent.* Beside the rent they have to pay so much a year to the government of the country. What are such sums called? *Taxes.* What are those persons called who collect these taxes?—*Tax collectors—tax gatherers.* Well you might, if you liked, call them *publicans.*)

Can you tell me the name of any publican among our Lord's disciples? What was he doing when Jesus spoke to him? And that you now know, means (*receiving taxes*).

Was Zaccheus an ordinary publican like Matthew, or not? Right; he was what we might call "a commissioner of taxes," to whom the ordinary collectors or publicans paid what they had received from the Jewish people. What else do we learn concerning him in ver. 2? How did rich men generally regard Christ? Give illustrations. Were there any exceptions? Name some. *Joseph of Arimathea* and *Nicodemus.* Yet even these, though sincere disciples of Christ, were ashamed (*to confess Him.*) Yes.

2. *Explanation*, ver. 3—6 (*mixed method*).—How did this rich publican feel towards Christ? What led him to feel this desire?

(Most likely he had heard very much of the Great Prophet who had now been manifested unto Israel for nearly three years, and had often been in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood.)

3. *Illustration* (*elliptically*).—On the day when the Princess Alexandra came into London where were all the people to be found? *Out in the streets.* Yes; as for the tall people, they could see over (*other people's heads*). And the boys, who could not do that, either got in the front of the crowd, or else they

(*climbed up the railings—up the lamp-posts, &c.*), and as the princess rode by the parks she looked up in the trees, and saw what? (*Boys and girls, and people up in the trees.*) Yes, just like this publican on the road that led from the city of (*Jericho*).

4. *Picture* (*mixed method*).—Now I want you to come with me, in imagination, along that country road. Let us leave behind us the city of Jericho, with its palaces, and priests, and people, and fancy we have run along the highway and climbed up into this sycamore fig-tree, which grows by the wayside. It is not difficult to climb. It is rather low, and its branches are thick, and wide-spreading, and some stretch partly across the road. See! here comes some one in great haste. It is a little man, he has tucked up that loose outer cloak of his, so that it may not (*prevent his running*); and as he comes nearer we see that his dress is of a very superior kind—neither coarse, dirty, nor torn; he is evidently a (*rich man*). Here he comes. Why, he is actually trying to climb up the next tree! He has managed it, too. There! the broad green leaves have quite hidden him. Now he peeps out, he is looking back towards (*Jericho*). How eager he seems! Hark! there is the hum of many voices. What a crowd! How they swarm through the city gates! What is it all about? The people are thronging round some one in the centre of the crowd. Who is it? There are a few near Him to whom he seems to be talking. Who are they?

(Continue the picture. Describe our Lord's approach; He stops opposite the tree; calls the little rich man by name, as though he was an old friend. How overjoyed Zaccheus was! How eagerly he ran to prostrate himself before the Great Prophet, and bid Him welcome to all his fine house contained.)

5. *Examination.*—What did Zaccheus desire? What difficulty was in the way? &c.

6. *Explanation resumed*, ver. 7—10. What did you tell me about Zaccheus' rank in society? How are rich men usually regarded? Was that the case with Zaccheus, or not? (ver. 7.) Why not? Give other instances of this feeling against publicans. Can you tell why it should have been so? . . . I think we shall be able to find out. What people were the *rulers* of Palestine in the time of our Lord? (If necessary, refer to Luke xx. 22; and John xix. 15, and elicit or

supply the fact that the publicans were hated because they collected tribute for a foreign power.)

7. *Examination.*—Where did you say Zaccheus went after coming down from the tree? With whom? For what purpose?

8. *Picture.*—Let us look at this rich man at home.

(Picture out the scene in the house of Zaccheus—the host—the Guest — the company — the remarkable confession of Zaccheus.)

III. Lesson (*mixed method*).—What strange words from such a man! Here is a rich tax receiver, whose only object had been to make money, standing up and declaring that the half of all his riches should at once be given to the poor; and that out of the remainder any one who had been unjustly taxed should have back four times as much! Why, what had happened to Zaccheus, since he ran along the road, and climbed up into yonder tree? What, had he been thinking of his own past life and conduct? And how do you think he felt on account of the sins he remembered? When persons reflect upon their sins, and feel sorry and ashamed on account of them, we say that they (*repent*). What is repentance? How do we know that Zaccheus truly repented of his past sins? *By his conduct. By what he said.* Yes, and not only by what Zaccheus himself said, but also by what (*Jesus said*). Repeat the verses.

Yes; if Zaccheus had been a hypocrite, our Lord, who knew his heart, would soon have declared his real character. What did He call Zaccheus? What did that mean? What does our Lord here say of Himself? Who are meant by "*the lost?*" To whom did Jesus specially refer at that time? In what sense was the rich publican "lost"? What happened to that lost one on that important day? By whom was he saved? From what was he saved?

Were there any other "lost ones" besides Zaccheus? Are there any such now? Who are "the lost" now? What is Christ's purpose with respect to the lost?

We are told that Zaccheus received Jesus—how? (*Joyfully.*) Did he receive Jesus in any other way than as a visitor? In what way? As a Saviour from what? Then Zaccheus came to Christ regarding himself—how? And how did he regard Christ?

As a Saviour for whom? When Zaccheus came as a sinner to Christ as a Saviour, how did the Saviour act towards this repentant publican? How did Christ show this? Repeat His words? How did Zaccheus show that he had been saved? What a sudden and wonderful change!

Was not the victory which Jesus gained over Zaccheus as great and remarkable as that which Joshua won, many hundred years before?

IV. APPLICATION (*mixed method*).

Whom did Christ come to seek and save? Are there any "lost" here? Who? What, then, do we need? To whom must we come? Feeling ourselves to be (*sinners*), and feeling Christ to be (*a Saviour*) for (*us.*)

Illustration.—I saw a letter the other day, written by a young Syrian girl, an orphan, whose father and mother were killed by another tribe, and who has since been adopted by a kind Christian friend living in Syria, and instructed in the truths of this blessed Book. "Oh! how thankful I am," she says, "that ever I went to the school! Once—

'I was a wandering sheep,
I did not love the fold,
I did not love my Shepherd's voice,
I would not be controll'd.'

But now—

'I love my heavenly Father's voice,
I love, I love His home.'"

We too, dear children, have been wandering sheep, like Zaccheus and Saada Azar,—lost in the wilderness of sin.

"Far, far we had wandered from goodness and God,
But the eyes of our Shepherd were o'er us;
He left the bright mansions, the angels' abode,
That He to His fold might restore us."

Let us turn to Him. We need not climb up trees. We can always find Him when we bend our knees in prayer. Let us go to Him like Zaccheus, as poor lost sinners, seeking pardon and salvation; and Jesus will hear us, and be our Saviour for ever, and we shall shew by our lives and future conduct, that salvation has come to us as it did to the rich publican of Jericho.

NOTE.—Many of the supposed replies of the scholars have been omitted for the sake of brevity. The dots . . . indicate that *no answer* is supposed to be given by the pupils.

Time admonishes me that the subject of GOVERNMENT and DISCIPLINE must be dealt with even more cursorily than I had anticipated, though of course an entire lecture would not suffice to do justice to so important a topic. Let me therefore throw my remarks into the shape of brief detached hints.

It will be readily admitted, I think, that Sunday school reform is needed here, if anywhere. Most of the schools present scenes of sad disorder, if not of absolute confusion, during the hours of teaching. The Highland piper, who spoke with rapture of one occasion when he was with bonnie Prince Charlie, and when "there were nineteen pipers a' thegither, each playing a different tune, and he thocht he was in heaven!" would have felt thoroughly at home in many a London school: but the scene is hardly so pleasing to educational eyes and ears. The fault rests in part with the school officers, but chiefly with the teachers, in ordinary cases. There is little order in the individual classes (with which alone we are concerned), and therefore little in the school as a whole. And, as a natural consequence, quiet thought is almost impossible, impression cannot be produced, and usefulness is not to be expected. The remedy for this widespread defect is simple enough—the difficulty being to induce teachers to carry it out. They must learn to govern their classes, and if they shrink from the effort from personal considerations, let them take

higher ground, and consider that it is a solemn duty which they owe to each scholar to train him to habits of obedience and subordination. If the child is under control during the week, it is injurious to him if the reins of authority are altogether cast aside on the Lord's day. If, as is too frequently the case, he is not duly governed elsewhere, the greater is the need that the Sunday school teacher should interpose to arrest the fatal influences of youthful licence.

Let every young teacher go to his or her class firmly resolved to obtain and preserve a wise and judicious authority *at any cost.* No good can be achieved without order, no order attained without government, and therefore the teacher must rule; unless, indeed, he is willing that the little society, of which he is the nominal head, should be governed by another of its members.

As a governor, the teacher must, as remarked in a former lecture, be able to govern himself. He must also set an example of obedience, paying implicit deference to the laws of the school, and to the orders of the superintendent during the exercises, that his pupils may not only follow him in that respect, but may be equally obedient to the rules of their own class. If Mr. Hobbs whispers to Mr. Dobbs on the next form, or holds a conversation with one of his scholars, or marks his register, or peeps into his magazines, when the superintendent is calling for silence and attention, he is adopting an effectual method of impairing his own authority as well as that of his official head.

Have *as few laws* as are consistent with the order and comfort of the class. Do not multiply prohibitions. "Toeing the mark," "wheeling to the right," and so forth, may be safely dispensed with in a place which should be modelled after the family rather than the regiment. But have so many rules as are necessary, and insist upon their being fully respected by every member of the class.

Children are influenced by different *motives* at different ages. Hence the call to obedience must be addressed to different springs of action. As motives to subordination, the *love and sympathy* of infants should be appealed to. Try to induce obedience from affection towards the teacher, and also from sympathetic imitation of the teacher's own decorum and orderly behaviour, as hinted just now. The desire to gain the approbation of the teacher and superintendent is of course a strong motive to obedience in junior scholars. Their imagination may also be appealed to, and a pleasing picture drawn to show "how nice" it is to be orderly and obedient.

In the case of elder scholars, government becomes more difficult, and the enforcement of discipline more critical, because of the development of the will (referred to in the first lecture), and because of the greater freedom of action enjoyed by the pupils. Having reached the age of reason, they must be dealt with as reasonable beings, and neither their sympathies nor their desire to please the teacher be appealed to. They have reached the age of conscience, and must be dealt with as capable of discerning the morally

right from the morally wrong. Hence the rule in governing Scripture scholars will generally assume the form, "Act thus because it is *reasonable*, and because it is *right*." We may also appeal with advantage to the self-respect and sense of propriety in young people of this age.

Authority can and must be maintained in the Sunday school class, of whatever grade the pupils may be. They must be taught to respect law, and made to suffer punishment if it be wilfully infringed. But I would earnestly deprecate all needless restrictions and harsh impositions, not only on educational grounds, but also because, as we well know, attendance upon our instructions is, in a large number of cases, voluntary. They need not continue in our schools unless they choose to do so, and it is a sorry gain to gratify a caprice at the cost of a scholar. Let them, therefore, have the fullest liberty of speech and action consistent with their good, and the welfare of the school at large. Yet it is not wise or right to pass over any wilful act of insubordination. Over-indulgence will secure neither affection nor respect.

An American lady, teaching a class of boys, desired them to read a certain passage together. For some reason or other one of the boys refused. She reasoned with him, but without effect. Quietly taking out her watch, she informed him that he had been guilty of an act of wilful disrespect, and that there was no course open to him but to obey or leave the class. She would give him three minutes for consi-

deration. Watch in hand, she waited in silence the result. The time expired, the boy hesitated a moment, and then said he would obey. He did so, and the lesson went on as usual.

Enforce obedience in a quiet, decided tone. A noisy, denunciatory manner provokes resistance. There is a wondrous power in tones of quiet firmness. It is said of the great tubular bridge over the Menai Straits, that while the weight of a heavy, clattering train of carriages scarcely deflects it half an inch from the true horizontal line, the noiseless sunbeams raise the centre of the huge fabric to the height of 1½ inches every day. In cases of obstinate resistance hand the offender over to the superintendent. Upon this point, the remarks of the late Mr. Althans, in his little tract, "The Teacher's Authority," are well worthy of attention:—

"In this matter, be very careful that you do not let your class even suppose that you have lost your authority by the admission that you have a scholar whom you cannot manage, but who rather appears capable of managing you. I am now considering what ought to be a *rare* instance, as the teacher must be feeble indeed who is frequently sending Sunday scholars to the superintendent. The direction I would offer in such a case is, let your whole class be apprised of what you are about to do, by a method somewhat like the following address to the class:—'I am now going, for this boy's continued bad conduct and interruption of the class, to hand him over to the superintendent; and I am *determined not to receive him back* into the

class till he has settled the matter with the superintendent, and promises to behave better.' By this means you prevent your authority from being sacrificed in the class."

This transference of authority to the superintendent should only be a last resource; yet with some teachers it is a constant occurrence. Its frequency, I have reason to think, arises mainly from two causes:— Teachers lose the control of their tempers, get angry, perhaps even furious with a refractory scholar; a scene of scuffling and confusion ensues; the superintendent comes forward, and the disconcerted teacher is unwise enough to make the public confession, "Here, sir, I can do nothing with this lad, will you please to take charge of him?" a statement which virtually confesses inability to maintain a rightful position, and invites further insubordination. Or else a case like the following occurs. A scholar persists in sitting where the teacher has forbidden him, or refuses to stand when ordered so to do. The teacher, nettled, seizes him by the arm, and compels obedience. A minute later, and the offence is repeated. Now a crisis has arrived. The teacher darts a reproving glance at the disobedient pupil, but does not repeat the act of compulsion. The scholar has conquered his teacher and repudiated his authority, and the teacher tacitly confesses his own defeat and submission. Who can wonder if the offender is encouraged in his disobedience, and the obvious lesson taught by the incident made use of by other members of the class? Such acts of misgovernment are a serious offence

against the whole school, as well as against the class specially concerned; independently of the moral injury inflicted on the rebellious scholar.

Finally, let the teacher be *impartial*. This does not mean, as some appear to imagine, that he should be sublimely indifferent to all his pupils, treating them as though they were like so many skittles of the same size and shape, to be dealt with mechanically after the same fashion. The teacher cannot help having *preferences;* but he can and must help manifesting those preferences by overt acts of favouritism. Neither should impartiality be evidenced by punishing all when some one pupil commits an offence, on the principle adopted by a worthy pedagogue whom I well know. I have it on very good authority that when his son, now grown to man's estate, was a scholar in his parent's academy, the latter, when about to administer corporal punishment to any of the boys, used to call up John, and address the pupils thus: "Boys, there is no favouritism here. I am quite impartial. I treat my own son just as I treat you, and therefore I shall flog him as well as the boy you see standing here." And thus the unlucky John received a duplicate thrashing whenever any of his schoolmates got into a scrape, in order to afford a visible vindication of his loving parent's impartiality. The impartiality now recommended is of a different stamp, and consists in this,—that the teacher shall give or withhold no mark of approbation and no token of displeasure on account of any personal preference (or the contrary) felt towards any individual scholar.

The sabbath class must be ruled in justice as well as in love.

Sunday school punishments must consist, in the main, of *disabilities* and *deprivations*, not of positive inflictions. The offender must be made to lose a privilege, rather than to submit to an imposition. And in proportion as the exercises of class and school are rendered attractive, in that proportion will deprivation of any be felt as a loss, and consequently act as a preventive against disobedience and insubordination. It is simply ludicrous to see a child who has been tired out by long sitting, placed on a form where he can enjoy an agreeable change of posture and a commanding view of the whole school, and then to hear it called a punishment; or an older scholar turned out of a class, the proceedings of which have been so unutterably dull that expulsion must be a welcome relief, and then surprise be expressed that he does not feel humbled, contrite, and miserable. The feeling of shame may indeed be sought to be looked in such cases, but if so the remedy is worse than the disease. Exposure crushes the timid though erring spirit, and provokes the bolder nature into shamelessness.

Never let correction involve degradation. It sinks the low nature lower still, and renders that incurable which might have been eradicated.

Our old Saxon pedagogues doubtless thought they did a clever thing when they more than anticipated Samuel Johnson's growling dictum,—"The only way to get Latin into a boy is by flogging it in," and

whipped the lad savagely, or barbarously pricked the soles of his feet as a stimulus to the acquisition of knowledge. They professed to employ the law of association, but unhappily they violated a far higher and moral law.

Then, is corporal punishment ever admissible in the Sunday school? I think it is. Unhappily, children are occasionally met with, who from evil training have learned to mistake leniency for weakness and gentleness for timidity, while at the same time they are so callous and indifferent that moral inflictions make no impression whatever upon their natures. With such, though the case is comparatively a rare one, punishment can only be effectually applied through the medium of physical pain, and it is better to inflict a little suffering upon the body, than by dismissing the offender—the only other alternative—to risk cutting him off from all holy and sacred influences, and so in truth delivering him over to the power of sin and Satan.

But in such instances the infliction should, I think, be administered by the superintendent *in his own room*, in the presence of the teacher, and the punishment be characterized by calmness and solemnity, and by prayer in presence of the offender. Never let corporal punishment be inflicted in moments of provocation, or for sudden and unpremeditated acts of disobedience. The true method of dealing with ordinary faults committed by children is to seek first to ascertain from what cause the act has really sprung —whether from ignorance, thoughtlessness, miscon-

ception, perversity, mischievousness, love of display, the influence of other and more unruly scholars, or such settled peculiarities of disposition as obstinacy, sullenness, and so on. The disease must be detected before the remedy can be intelligently applied.

The ruling motives and susceptibilities of the pupil should be appealed to as incentives to penitence as to obedience. In the youngest grade of children in our schools, the *affections* should be appealed to; in those a little older, the offender should be shown to have incurred *disapprobation;* or, if an elder scholar, to have offended against *reason and conscience*, the sense of fitness and propriety, or against manliness or womanliness. The teacher of youths must not be an arbitrary ruler, though the teacher of young children may, and indeed must often be arbitrary, simply because it would be useless to *reason* with them in support of his commands.

And now, dear fellow-labourers, my pleasant task must be drawn to a close. Much has been said, but much more left unsaid. I trust it will not be attributed to forgetfulness, still less to want of due appreciation, that the more spiritual aspects of our work have been but incidentally referred to. The nature and fruits of conversion, the efficacy of prayer, the cultivation of a high degree of personal piety,—these are topics which stand second to none; and, therefore, if discussed at all, should receive special and undivided consideration. Your attention has been called chiefly to those educational rules and principles which, although they may hold but a

secondary rank among the influences which the Sunday school teacher is appointed to wield, can never be neglected without danger, nor ignored without some degree of presumption or folly. To the members of the Sunday School Union Training Class the truth is axiomatic, and needs no argument in its favour, that, so long as the Sunday school instructor claims to be the expositor of a *Book*, so long must piety, earnestness, and prayer be supplemented by study and preparation; and the truth be applied in accordance with the laws of matter and mind.

I trust that the inquiries which we have been permitted to pursue together have not proved utterly destitute of interest or instruction, and without anticipating results disproportionate to the humble means employed, it is perhaps reasonable to hope that our hasty review of "Our Work," and the methods of rightly preparing for it, will at least have deepened our impressions of its greatness, solemnity, and responsibility. We have gazed upon the *material* and found it to be the fairest and most precious of all the Creator's handiwork. We have examined the *instruments* of our art, and found the chief of them to be also of heavenly origin, the product and gift of *His* hand, whose "works are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." We have contemplated the *object* and end of our toil, and we see in it the highest and noblest result that human thought can conceive, or human enterprise pursue. And the more we have regarded our office, the more we have wondered how obscure and undistinguished workers like ourselves

could ever hope to meet its demands. We have placed ourselves in imagination face to face with our work, and the longer we have looked, the grander its proportions have seemed to grow. We have thought of the eloquent words of the American statesman, and rejoiced "with trembling" to think how closely they applied even to us,—"We know, when we work upon materials immortal and imperishable, that they will bear the impress which we place upon them for endless ages to come. If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we engrave upon brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble to dust. But if we work on men's immortal minds, if we imbue them with high principles, with the just fear of God and of their fellowmen, we engrave on those tablets something which no time can efface, but which will brighten and brighten to all eternity."

But we are not so weak or so sanguine as to suppose that the mass of our fellow-men will endorse the view we take of our unpretentious toil. By some it is simply unrecognized, through ignorance; by others, maligned and denounced, because hated and feared; by others, again, sanctioned and patronized, in order that ambitious littleness may use us as stepping-stones to dignity. Let all such be well assured that we commiserate their ignorance, smile at their censures, and repudiate their form of condescension. The Christian teacher of youth expects and desires no secular reward. He knows well that men have not yet learned, even in this age of progress, to subordinate in their esteem the material and sensuous

to the immaterial and spiritual. The world has its sonorous plaudits and its glittering honours for the winner of an empire, the leader of a party, the expositor of law, the successful artist, the popular poet, and even the skilful potter; and when these favoured ones bow to the stroke that lays the proudest low, there is a place for their honoured dust amidst the noble, the learned, and the brave.

> "Amid the noblest of the land
> Men lay the sage to rest,
> And give the bard an honoured place,
> With costly marble drest,
> In the old minster-transept,
> Where lights like glories fall,
> And the choir sings, and the organ rings
> Along the emblazoned wall."

But the world has no gifts for him who, sabbath after sabbath, in the dark, ill-ventilated Sunday school, has achieved conquests over ignorance and sin; who, with no self-seeking, has given to human law the highest of all sanctions, and sown the seeds of the truest patriotism, in an enlightened obedience to recognized authority, a cheerful industry in prosperous days, and a patient and unmurmuring submission in times of poverty and privation; who has sought to restore the golden days of which poets sing, and who, regardless of human praise or blame, has sought to fashion immortal minds after the image of the One Perfect Man.

He needs and desires them not. To him the warm affections of youth, clinging around him as the ivy

around the oak, are dearer than the fickle applause of the noisy crowd; the testimony of an approving conscience sweeter than the incense of unreasoning praise; and the lineaments of youthful piety fairer than the fairest creations of art. And as for the future, so long as the work of life be well and truly done, he cares not where the empty tabernacle shall lie, when its occupant shall be hymning Immanuel's praises before the throne, "clothed upon with its house which is from heaven." What matters it that his humble resting-place be all unmarked by stone or epitaph, if his image be enshrined in the hearts of those whom he taught the way to paradise, and their lives be his everlasting memorial? Yea, though his very name be forgotten, his work shall abide to all eternity.

"Needs there the praise of the love-written record—
The name and the epitaph graved on the stone?
The things we have lived for, let them be our story,
We but remembered by what we have done.

"I need not be missed; if my life has been bearing
(As its summer and autumn moved silently on)
The bloom, and the fruit, and the seed of its season,
I shall still be remembered by what I have done.

"I need not be missed; if another succeed me
To reap down those fields which in spring I have sown,
He who ploughed and who sowed is not missed by the reaper,
He is only remembered by what he has done.

"Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken—
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown,
Shall pass on to ages—all about me forgotten
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have done.

"So let my living be, so be my dying—
So let my name be, unblazoned, unknown—
Unpraised, and unmissed, I shall yet be remembered—
Yes, but remembered by what I have done."

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