

Primary Department.—One Thing at a Time.

BY MRS. M. C. HAYWARD.

I would like, if I might, to offer from my own experience, a few helpful words or suggestions to my fellow-workers in the Primary Department, especially to those who have just taken up the work. Some one has said that Sabbath-school teachers are character builders, and the souls we influence bear the impress of our example and teaching. If this be true, then it seems to me that in no department of Sabbath-school work do we need consecrated love, wisdom and patience more than in the primary room. We have the most tender and delicate, and at the same time most precious material to work upon, the pure inexpressible hearts of little children. Surely ours is a divine commission, and we seem to hear coming down to us our Saviour's loving command, "Feed my lambs."

Let everyone to whom the Master has entrusted the spiritual feeding of his lambs ask themselves the question, "What am I feeding them, and how?" It is possible to give the right kind of food, and yet give it in such a way that it will be indigestible. We primary teachers often make the mistake of presenting too many thoughts at once. We who are older see so much in the lessons, and our hearts go out in a strong desire to have the children see it too; but we must ever remember that little feet take short steps, and the wise teacher will accommodate her pace to theirs.

I have found in my own experience that the better way is to select the central truth of the lesson, and then let all the exercises of the hour bear upon that point. Even the little tots will remember one thought if thoroughly impressed, but if too many thoughts are presented at once, their ideas get confused and they will remember nothing clearly. The thought that "God is love" thoroughly impressed upon the child-mind will do more for the spiritual development of that child than if we should present to it whole pages of Jewish history.

Bible history is grand and good for those who are old enough to understand it, but little minds need something which they can grasp and retain. We often hear the remark that the Interna-

tional Lessons are too hard for the primary scholars. So they would be many times if we expected the children to view them from our standpoint. As well might a mother expect her babe to thrive and grow physically strong on the same food required by the older members of the family. We can all understand what the result of such treatment would be, and no wise mother would think of such a thing.

Shall we, then, to whom the Good Shepherd has entrusted, to a certain extent, the spiritual feeding of his tender lambs, be less careful in choosing for them the "sincere milk of the Word," that they may grow thereby. Whether the lesson be historical, biographical, or doctrinal, the loving, prayerful teacher can always glean from it some sweet simple truth to present to her little ones; but the methods of presenting and impressing these truths will, of course, depend largely upon circumstances and surroundings.

Our aim should never be to amuse, but always to instruct—not merely to pass a pleasant hour, but to feed those inquiring, receptive minds with food convenient for them. The teacher, in order to do this, must have a heart filled with love to God and little children—one who, as far as possible, places himself or herself on a level with the children, and earnestly tries to view the lesson from their standpoint, and thus with loving patience leads them along the pathway of spiritual development. The conceptions which their little minds form of God are influenced largely by our teaching. How important, then, that we should present God as a pure, loving and all-wise Father, who while hating sin still loves the sinner, and Christ as a tender, forgiving, and sympathetic Saviour. These precious thoughts stamped upon their minds in childhood will never be effaced. May God help us to be constantly guided by this spirit in our divinely appointed work.

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Methodist Magazine and Review for February.

The up-to-date character of this magazine is shown in the current interest of many of its articles. "Among the Filipinos" is an account of the islands on which the world's attention is now