

*lays hold upon and pervades his class.*

They are all affected in degree as he is himself. This specially the case in teaching spiritual lessons. The sincerity and intensity of conviction with which the truth is held by the Teacher, is in some measure communicated to the pupils. Just as when one string upon a harp or violin is made to vibrate forcibly all the rest are moved in sympathy with it. Thus it is that a hearty burst of laughter carries a whole household into a similar state of mirth. A sudden rush of anger from one heart quickly spreads among hundreds. A piercing wail of sorrow issuing from a desolate broken heart often moves to tears those it reaches. When the perfect man stood by the grave of Lazarus and saw the two sisters of the deceased sobbing with grief "Jesus wept." This is not an incidental occurrence, but an illustration of the law of our common humanity. The call to strike and to resist oppression, uttered by the leader in tones of determined courage, has inspired a whole army with the spirit of victory. Thus all experience more or less what is originated and propagated by one. This same law, be it remembered, is true in relation to our intellectual activity as well as our emotional nature. And as already hinted the depth and permanence of the experience we cause others to have are determined by the vividness and intensity of our own mental activity. What I mean is this, when in teaching you are so controlled and absorbed by one overmastering thought that all others are necessarily excluded, and the entire force of your spiritual nature is so concentrated upon it that you can truly say—"This one thing I do"—that thought is sure to become the mental property of your pupil, to enter into his very being. This law acts to a great extent irrespective of the subject matter of what is being taught. It may be Geography or Geometry, History or the eternal verities of Christianity. If the soul of the Teacher is burning with intense concentrated enthusiasm over the matter in hand, whatever it may be, he will lay the truth thus apprehended upon the mind of his pupil with such transforming power as to throw him for the time being into a precisely similar condition to his own. When this is the case, success is achieved—the work of teaching is really done. But failing to be thus borne along by a strongly dominant purpose or thought, which should always be the central or ruling thought of the lesson in the case of the Sunday School Teacher, his work is largely lost, and he but feebly and obscurely reappears in his pupil. Deservedly so, too, because he is lacking in one of the prime elements essential to success.

(2) *Our passive states of mind grow weak by repetition.*—It is necessary to explain and illustrate this law and to show how it acts in relation to the work of the Teacher.

Passive states are those induced by impressions made upon us through our bodily senses, and without any effort of will on our part. The more frequently they are experienced without any active exertion of our will-power, the feebler they become. For example. We witness a spectacle of deep distress and the impression made upon us the first time is strong and vivid, but we do nothing, exercise no volition to relieve the distress. Let this be repeated a sufficient number of times and the impression becomes so feeble as to be almost imperceptible. Our sensibilities are being slowly but surely deadened, or we are being hardened by the sight of distress.

Take as another illustration—the case of the medical student who enters the dissecting room for the first time. The impression made upon him by what he sees is deep and startling. He is shocked, but let him continue his visits, and pursue his work, in that same place of ghastly sights for several years, and the impressions made upon him become so enfeebled by repetition that he scarcely regards his surroundings as in any sense abnormal. You see the working of this law. Look at another correlated law:

(3.) *Our active mental states are strengthened by repetition.*—Active states are those into which we pass by volition by the exercise of our innate will power.

Look again at a case of unmistakable distress. By a deliberate act of will you overcome a feeling of disinclination to deal with it, and you put yourself about to afford relief. That is to say by an act of resolute choice, you turn to proper account the passive state into which you have been thrown by the sight of misery. You do so again, and again, ten, fifteen, twenty times. What is affirmed is that these repetitions give greater strength, a larger measure of ability to grant relief—such actions become easy and natural because a habit of virtue is gradually formed in the direction of benevolence, and thus you escape the serious danger of personal deterioration by having your feelings weakened and destroyed through frequent appeals to them without corresponding action on your part. It is under the action of these laws that the readers of sensational novels, and our theatre-going population inflict irreparable mischief upon themselves. Their emotional nature is stimulated to the last degree by exaggerated representations of imaginary woes over which they weep in their boxes and on their luxurious couches, while they do nothing to relieve suffering humanity at their doors.