

may be called teaching—altogether too common in the home and in the Sunday School; nor is it by any means unknown in the secular education of the week-day school. It is often done unwittingly by parents and teachers, who mistake the ability to repeat a certain form of words for the possession of the ideas which these words represent; and so rest supremely satisfied, thoughtlessly supposing that the child is gaining new knowledge.

It may be granted that catechisms and other matter may be committed to memory and held during childhood as meaningless words, becoming intelligible later on, as the mind is more fully developed.

This admission, however, by no means closes the contention. Evil consequences of a serious nature follow as the natural result of such teaching. Habits are acquired which become a barrier to progress in knowledge. The effect of storing up meaningless words in the memory is to establish a tendency to take in words with utter disregard for ideas. This tendency easily fastens itself upon the mind and becomes a life habit. The person who is the victim of such a habit may listen with a fair show of attention to a sermon or a lecture, giving no heed to the thoughts expressed, his interest arising exclusively from the agreeable sound of a pleasant voice and the elocutionary tricks of the speaker.

The blunders made by children who have been taught orally before they have learned to read, afford amusing illustrations of the way in which the recitation of words may be mistakenly accepted for the possession of knowledge. "Mother, what is the *miz*?" was asked by a little girl who had been taught the commandments in this way. "The *miz*, my child, what do you mean? I do not know of any such thing," replied the mother. "Why yes, mother, you know it says 'In six days he made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in the *miz* (them is).'"

The memorizing of unintelligible words may be tolerated when nothing better can be done. Thus, in the home it may be that the parents have no teaching skill and the best

they can do is to drill their children in the catechism, or direct them in some other purely memoriter work.

Shall we then preclude the skilled teacher from the use of the catechism? By no means. It is the abuse of the catechism that is forbidden by sound pedagogy. The skilled teacher will not ask the child to memorize words that have to him no meaning; nor will he give him formulated doctrine to commit to memory, until he has first guided him in the discovery of this doctrine as it is taught in the Bible. The method of doing this I shall try briefly to illustrate.

For this purpose I shall take the question, "*What is the chief end of man?*" Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." According to the principles which I have laid down, several steps are involved in the development of the answer. As the limitations of this paper do not permit full discussion, I shall select the idea expressed by the words "glorify God." I bring before the scholar the incident in the journeyings of the Israelites in the wilderness, in which, on account of stubborn disobedience, God proposes to destroy the people and to make of Moses and his descendants a great nation in their stead. Note how Moses receives the proposal. Selfish ambition has no place in his thoughts. God's honor is paramount to every other consideration and therefore he reverently reminds the Almighty that the destruction of the people would bring reproach on the name of their God amongst the inhabitants of the land, and continues to intercede for the people until he has gained and the people are spared.

From this illustration properly presented I should hope that my scholars would learn that Moses sought the honor of God before everything else, or as the chief aim or end of his life. I should get them to state this in their own words. I should give them the term "glorify" as the equivalent for honor. Finally, after the other points in the answer had developed in a similar way, I should give them the words of the catechism to commit to memory.

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