

Teacher Training.

TEXT-BOOK : HOLBORN'S "THE BIBLE THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEXT-BOOK."

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CHAPTER V.

ON THE MEANS OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, UNDER THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, WITH EXAMPLES.

How were people, and especially children, taught Divine Truth, in Bible days? The Bible answers briefly and inferentially.

1. BY PARENTAL INSTRUCTION. This is the oldest and most efficient mode. It was that of the Patriarchs (Gen. 48: 49). The law of Moses enjoined it. Eli and Samuel failed in it, but David taught Solomon. King Lemuel was taught by his mother (Proverbs 31). The Talmud, the rabbins, and Josephus, refer to such instruction. Jesus was thus taught. The Apostles counselled parents to teach their children. Timothy had his mother and grandmother for teachers.

2. BY RITES AND SYMBOLS. The Jewish ritual was pictorial instruction in religious truth. The Patriarchal sacrifices, as expiatory, emphasized the truth, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, and as thank offerings that God is to be served with man's best. All the ceremonial laws of Moses were God's voice, saying: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, taught gratitude for national deliverance, and for the gifts of the seasons. The Sabbath taught that time is God's, and that man's dependants should share his rest.

3. BY PUBLIC READINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES. As early as Deut. 31 : 9, 13 this was directed. In later times it was much neglected. It was revived in the reign of Josiah (II. Chron. 34 : 14, 33), and after the captivity (Nehemiah 8). Also, long before, in the reign of Jehoshaphat (II. Chron. 17 : 7-9).

4. BY TEACHERS DIVINELY COMMISSIONED—THE PROPHETS. A prophet does not necessarily foretell; he speaks out for God. Moses was the first and greatest, and spoke to all. Nathan and Gad were private instructors of royalty. Samuel, Elijah and Isaiah, served in both capacities. The words of many were written down for public instruction. The teaching of the prophets was prophetic, political, and personally practical.

5. BY SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS. These began with Samuel, and extended to the first captivity. In the time of Ahab there were three schools at Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal. They are referred to as married and single, as companies, and as assembling on special days, in II. Kings 4 : 1, 7, 38, 44; I. Kings 18 : 4; 22 : 6; II. Kings 4 : 23; 6 : 32.

6. BY SERVICE OF SONG. National songs form character. The Psalms, and the songs of Moses and Deborah (Exod. 15; Judges 5) were those of the Hebrews. Jehoshaphat's army sang Psalm 136, as did that of the Maccabees. The Talmud refers to family praise. Jesus sang a hymn with His Disciples. Those who kept the feasts at Jerusalem sang on the way. The schools of the Prophets cultivated psalmody. In David's time 4,000 Levites composed the choir of the Lord's House. They served in courses for a fortnight each year, and the rest of the time taught at home. Inspired singers were called Prophets, and their service was regarded as of the greatest importance.

7. BY THE SYNAGOGUE. This means "a coming together." It arose at the time of the Exile. (See Ezekiel 8 : 1; 14 : 1; 20 : 1.) On the return from the captivity solemn meetings became periodic, and were fully established in the interval between the Old and New Testaments. Wherever the Jews went they established a synagogue, or, when few, a *proseucha*, or smaller place of prayer. These had a liturgical service, alternating with readings of the Law and the Prophets, and, occasionally, of the Hagiographa. Jesus of Nazareth and Capernaum read and preached in the synagogues. Paul and Barnabas did the same at Antioch, in Pisidia, and elsewhere.

8. BY SCHOOLS. Children of 5 were allowed to attend the synagogue. After 12 they became sons of the law and had to do so. There were private schools for the wealthy, but instruction in the law was given by doctors of the synagogue in special chambers. Infant schools were first established by Jesus, son of Gamaliel, about 66 A. D. *Rabbinical schools* were colleges for young men, and began about 100 B. C. Paul was taught in one of these by Gamaliel. Their teaching is found in the Talmud, which contains some gems of wisdom amid a mass of learned trifling and absurd folly. Christ condemned the teaching of these schools unsparingly.