

Philosophers are no exception to this rule. They may theoretically assert absolute independence of thought, and each one who appears either in an essay or a voluminous treatise, may promise to show the world truth never before disclosed, yet when closely searched, what they are least remarkable for is originality. Their utterances are the echoes of the near or distant past. Take but one illustrious example. God sent Socrates into the world endowed with amazing power of thought, and while he founded no college, and presided over no great university, yet, as a teacher, he so reproduced himself in his pupils that after the lapse of more than two thousand three hundred years, men have not ceased to speak of the Socratic philosophy. And so in numerous other well known instances, such as Plato, Hegel, Kant, Hume and Hamilton.

But high above all teachers stands the one who speaks as man never speaks, the perfect one, who is the pattern and guide of all the Sunday school workers. They cannot improve upon His methods, their business and wisdom is to understand and follow them. Having in Himself the fulness of the Godhead, and having come to this world as the supreme teacher of our race, He is represented in and by His pupils, in all ages and countries, and He shall continue to be seen in them to the end, and through eternity, while they "with unveiled faces reflect the glory of the Lord," 2 Cor. III : 18.

It may be conceded, with necessary limitations, that the strength and the weakness of a teaching staff, whether in a Sunday school or a secular institution, can be more or less distinctly discerned in the character and conduct of those who pass through their hands. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Hence the state of the classes is the best practical test of the skill and efficiency of the teachers.

There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, for which full allowance must be made. The power of the very best teacher to stamp himself upon his pupil may be largely neutralized by noisy surroundings, and lack of isolation, where he is called to do his work. Then there are wayward persons, old and young, of limited capacity and abundant dullness and stubbornness. There are persons whose natures are not plastic, but hard and non-receptive, and incapable, especially because of overweening conceit, because of their firm belief that they already possess all the knowledge they need—of being moulded to any considerable extent. But this is not commonly the case with children at the age when we have to deal with them in the Sabbath school, it is rather a feature of crude and ill balanced manhood.

Then indeed it must be acknowledged that in some instances the very best teacher may fail to reproduce himself in his pupil. For example, there may be a prepossession of fancied knowledge, or an incarnation of vice, that will completely destroy this possibility. Judas Iscariot entered the training class of Jesus Christ as a thief, and, although he listened to the lessons of his Master against serving mammon, and as to the sin and danger of inordinate desire for riches, he closed his three years course in the best college ever instituted without being cured of his overmastering vice, and crowned his sin and infamy by selling his master for the price of a slave.

The teacher and the lessons were not at fault. They were most impressive and successful in the case of eleven out of the twelve students, so much so that they were ever after recognized as graduates from the school of the unequalled Teacher of Nazareth, and therefore when Ananias, the high priest, and his distinguished associates, saw the boldness of Peter and John, as they stood before them, and when they "per-

ceived that they were unlearned men"—according to their standard of learning—"they marvelled and took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." The clearness, courage, and convincing power with which they uttered their views, and the spirit which governed them brought forcibly to the mind of the council the great Master by whom they were taught. They saw in Peter and John a reproduction, a facsimile, shall I say, however imperfect, of that unequalled teacher, sent from God, as all teachers should be. Thus much for the fact that the teacher is reproduced in the pupil.

## II. THE RATIONALE OF THIS FACT.

The question now is, by what principles or laws of our nature does it happen that the teacher reappears in the pupil? We answer:—

I. *The dominant thought or passion in the instructor lays hold upon and pervades his class.*

They are all affected in degree as he himself is. This is preeminently the case in teaching spiritual lessons. The sincerity and intensity of conviction with which the truth is held and declared 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 is moved in sympathy with it.

Thus it is by the law of sympathy between man and man, 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 and a furious mob may be set in action. The cry of some timid one exposed to danger, real or imaginary, may create a panic among a multitude. The word of a brave and resolute captain may infuse courage into a whole regiment. A piercing wail of sorrow from the lips of some broken hearted one, often moves to tears a whole company. When the Perfect Man stood by the grave of Lazarus and saw the two sisters of the deceased, sobbing with grief,— "Jesus wept." This was not an exception or accidental occurrence, but an illustration of the laws of our common humanity.

And this law, be it remembered, is true in relation to an intellectual activity as well as our emotional nature. As already hinted the depth and permanence of the experiences we cause others to have as the result of our lessons, are determined by the vividness and intensity of our own mental and emotional 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, consecrated, 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, the care of the Sabbath 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 to success.