

teach, are of the very heart of all happy social living through discipleship and fellowship with Jesus Christ, how vain will be our efforts to build an enduring civilization!

In fact, the rapid growth of public education is but another challenge to the church to fulfil her age old mission of religious education. The urgent need of this hour is, that the forces which make for religion and morals, shall control the forces making for intellectual and material development.

The supreme task of this generation, is, therefore, no less a one than bringing up a generation of young Canadians in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord."

This is a big task—big enough and difficult enough to tax the combined wisdom and resources of Canadian religious leaders and churches.

Religious education is fundamental:

First, because it lays hold of life at its source. As we grow older, we become set in our ways. Adult men and women are notoriously hard to change. Professor James goes so far as to say that very few adults take on any radical change in life at all. But the child is yet in the making. We can mould him almost to our will. The significance of this fact is dramatically pointed out by Benjamin Kidd in his arresting book, *The Science of Power*, in which he says that any nation, through its

leaders, by laying hold on the young life of the nation, may bring about an entire change in the ideals, outlook and motives of a whole people in a single generation. In the light of this saying, it can be seen how far reaching is the work of the Sunday School and all other agencies in the field of religious education.

Secondly: Religious education is fundamental, *because it deals with the whole of life.* Every aspect of life has a religious bearing and religion affects every relationship of life. Other things have to do with phases and parts of life, but religion touches all of life. It goes to the roots of things. It changes the heart out of which are the issues of life. It sets free the central impulses and energies of the soul. It creates new motives to action, and changes old ones. It vitalizes and quickens every energy and power making for social and moral efficiency. It is essential, therefore, that the religious education becomes as universal and effective in the whole of life as public education is in its sphere.

Only when we thus face the breadth and magnitude of this undertaking, do we realize how utterly insufficient have been our efforts in the past, and how greatly we must enlarge our vision and increase our earnestness and enthusiasm, so that this fundamental work of the religious education of the young may be accomplished.

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At Work on the Lesson

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In order that, as Sunday School teachers, we may accomplish as much as possible during the half-hour lesson period, it is desirable that we should have in advance a fairly complete notion of what we wish to accomplish. Lessons vary, however, so do pupils,—and so, for that matter, do teachers; hence it is not an easy thing to make suggestions or outline plans for lesson procedure which will prove helpful under all conditions. Nevertheless, there are three aims of a general sort which, in the opinion of the writer, should control the work of both teacher and class during every ordinary lesson period.

There should be, in the first place, an effort to establish a connection between the lesson studied and its context. This context is of two general kinds: first, the textual context consisting of the larger portion of Scripture from which the lesson is taken, and second, the context furnished by the lesson series as a whole.

The textual context may in particular cases be a few verses only, or a whole chapter, or a whole book. In the study of a parable, we should certainly take into consideration the

circumstances under which the parable was spoken, and our study would also widen itself sufficiently to give the emotional as well as the historical setting, so that the pupil might feel what one might call the atmosphere of the lesson. In the study of an extract from one of Paul's epistles, we would probably make some inquiry as to the circumstances which led to the writing of the epistle in question, and so, in a sense, we would be bringing a knowledge of a whole book to bear upon the study of a single extract.

Besides these two general kinds of context, there is the context in the pupil's own previous Sunday School study. What has he learned in other lessons which will help him in the interpretation of this one?

This use of outside material and recall of previous experience will take place just as often as it is needed, and no oftener. A useful introduction is often found in a brief reference to questions which the class and teacher have discussed together in the not remote past. Reference to the contexts described above may, however, be useful throughout the lesson, as well as at the beginning.