

read may be forgotten, what we see will always be remembered.

If we can only universally introduce these three principles, we need have no fear of the future of our church, so far as missionary interest is concerned.

Toronto

The Essentials of Good Teaching

By Professor O. J. Stevenson, D. Paed.

IV. TRAINING THE ATTENTION

(a) The Nature of Attention

Most teachers, if asked to state what they consider to be the most essential thing in teaching, would reply, "To keep the attention of the class", for without attention no learning whatever can take place. When, however, we enquire what attention is, we must be satisfied with only the very general answer, that it is the active side of consciousness. Perhaps we can get a better idea of its nature by a comparison. Most people, at some time or other, have seen a searchlight at work. As it turns from point to point, now one feature of the landscape, and now another, stands out distinctly, while the whole of the surroundings are still in darkness. Attention works in a similar way. It is the focus point of the mind, which is continually moving from object to object, so that whatever we attend to stands out clear and distinct from its shadowy surroundings.

There can, of course, be no such thing as inattention. In our waking moments we are always attending to something. Attention, however, may rapidly alternate from one thing to another, as in the case of the boy who is trying to test a new knife or draw a picture, and at the same time follow what the teacher is saying. Or we may *do* two things at once, which is quite a different matter. By long practice we learn to do some things without attending to them, and it is quite easy for us, for example, to turn a bit of machinery while reading a newspaper, or to ride a bicycle while attending to the character of the landscape around us. Of course, too, at different times, our power of attention varies. When we are tired out, or ill, or bewildered, we are not able to focus the mind so clearly and steadily as when we are feeling rested and well.

It is very important, also, to notice that attention is constantly shifting and never fixed. We never attend to the *same* thing for two successive moments. Some new phase of an object must present itself from moment to moment, or else the attention wanders. Attention thus consists of a series of brief adjustments following one another in rapid succession. The mental focus, in other words, is constantly at work, examining the material presented, separating the old from the new, and building up a newer and wider experience as a result.

But if attention is constantly moving, let us enquire, in the next place, what controls its movements. Do we attend at random to all objects that happen to present themselves? Far from it. We attend, on the other hand, only to those objects that have some agreeable connection with our past experience. In other words, we attend only to what *interests* us, and we have already seen that things are interesting to us only in so far as we find that they have given us satisfaction in the past. It is impossible that we should attend to what is entirely new to us. It was noticed on one occasion, for example, that some aboriginal Indians, in passing in procession through the streets of London, paid no attention whatever to the supremely interesting features of the city about them. These were objects with which they had had no experience, and which, in consequence, did not appeal to them at all.

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The Making of a Sabbath School

By Rev. Alex. Macgillivray

IV. INSPIRATION

The sustained and "winning" worker, of every calling and age, has his inspiration. And under its impulse he presses on. "I magnify mine office", said the greatest merely human teacher of his own or any generation. The failures are they who *perform*, only through the constraint of necessity. The successes are they who *do*, as a privilege, and are inspired by love. In Sabbath School work, it will be love of the Lord, the Lord's truth and the Lord's child.

As well look for life without breath, as for a