

get knowledge into the mind, but to fix it there. In other words, the power of the memory must be strengthened. Teaching, then, most truly, and in every stage of it, is a strictly cooperative process. You cannot cause any one to know, by merely pouring out stores of knowledge in his hearing, any more than you can make his body grow by spreading the contents of your market-basket at his feet. You must rouse his power of attention, that he may lay hold of, and receive, and make his own, the knowledge you offer him. You must awaken and strengthen the power of memory within him, that he may retain what he receives, and thus grow in knowledge, as the body by a like process grows in strength and muscle. In other words, learning, so far as the mind of the learner is concerned, is doing whatever is necessary to cause that growth.

Let us proceed a step farther in this matter.

One of the ancients observes that a lamp loses none of its own light by allowing another lamp to be lit from it. He uses the illustration to enforce the duty of liberality in imparting our knowledge to others. Knowledge he says, unlike other treasures, is not diminished by giving.

The illustration fails to express the whole truth. This imparting of knowledge to others, not only does not impoverish the owner, but it actually increases his riches. *Doctus discit.* By teaching we learn. A man grows in knowledge by the very act of communicating it. The reason for this is obvious. In order to communicate to the mind of another a thought which is in our own mind, we must give to the thought definite shape and form. We must handle it, and pack it up for safe conveyance. Thus the mere act of giving a thought expression in words, fixes it more deeply in our own minds. Not only so; we can in fact, very rarely be said to be in full possession of a thought ourselves, until by the tongue or the pen we have communicated it to somebody else. The expression of it in some form, seems necessary to give it, even in our own minds, a definite shape and a lasting impression. A man who devotes himself to solitary reading and study, but never tries in any way to communicate his acquisitions to the world, or to enforce his opinions upon others, rarely becomes a learned man. A great many confused, dreamy ideas, no doubt, float through the brain of such a man; but he has little exact and reliable knowledge. The truth is, there is a sort of indolent, listless absorption of intellectual food, that tends to idiocy. I knew a person once, a gentleman of wealth and leisure, who having no taste for social intercourse, and no material wants to be supplied, which might have required the active exercise of his powers, gave himself up entirely to solitary reading, as a sort of lux-

urious self-indulgence. He shut himself up in his room, all day long, day after day, devouring one book after another, until he became almost idiotic by the process, and he finally died of softening of the brain. Had he been compelled to use his mental acquisitions in ~~enriching his body~~, or had the love of Christ constrained him to use them in the instruction of the poor and the ignorant, he might have become not only a useful, but a learned man.

We see a beautiful illustration of this doctrine in the case of Sabbath school teachers, and one reason why persons so engaged usually love their work, is the benefit which they find in it for themselves. I speak here, not of the spiritual, but of the intellectual benefit. By the process of teaching others, they are all the while learning. This advantage in their case is all the greater, because it advances them in a kind of knowledge in which, more than in any other kind of knowledge, men are wont to become passive and stationary. In ordinary worldly knowledge, our necessities make us active. The intercourse of business, and of pleasure even, makes men keen. On these subjects we are all the while bandying thoughts to and fro; we are accustomed to give as well as take; and so we keep our intellectual armor bright, and our thoughts well defined. But in regard to growth in religious knowledge, we have a tendency to be mere passive recipients, like the young man just referred to. Sabbath after Sabbath we hear good, instructive, orthodox discourses, but there is no active putting forth of our own powers in giving out what we thus take in, and so we never make it effectually our own. The absorbing process goes on, and yet we make no growth. The quiescent audience is a sort of exhausted receiver, into which the stream from the pulpit is perennially playing, but never making it full. Let a man go back and ask himself, What actual scriptural knowledge have I gained by the sermons of the last six months? What in fact do I retain in my mind, at this moment, of the sermons I heard only a month ago? So far as the hearing of sermons is concerned, the Sabbath school teacher may be no better off than other hearers. But in regard to general growth in religious knowledge, he advances more rapidly than his fellow worshippers, because the exigencies of his class compel him to a state of mind the very opposite of this passive reciprocity. He is obliged to be all the while, not only learning, but putting his acquisitions into definite shape for use, and the very act of using these acquisitions in teaching a class, fixes them in his own mind, and makes them more surely his own.

I have used this instance of the Sabbath school teacher because it enforces an important hint already given, as to the mode of

teaching. Some teachers, especially in Sabbath schools, seem to be ambitious to do a great deal of talking. The measure of their success, in their own eyes, is their ability to keep up a continued stream of talk for the greater part of the hour. This is of course better than the embarrassing silence sometimes seen, where neither the teacher nor scholar has anything to say. But at the best, it is only the pouring into the exhausted receiver enacted over again. We can never be reminded too often, that there is no teaching except so far as there is active cooperation on the part of the learner. The mind receiving must reproduce and give back what it gets. This is the indispensable condition of making any knowledge really our own. The very best teaching I have ever seen, has been where the teacher said comparatively little. The teacher was of course, brimful of the subject. He could give the needed information at exactly the right point, and in the right quantity. But for every word given by the teacher, there were many words of answering reproduction on the part of the scholars. Youthful minds under such tutelage grow apace.

It is indeed a high and difficult achievement in the educational art, to get young persons thus to bring forth their thoughts freely for examination and correction. A pleasant countenance and a gentle manner, inviting and inspiring confidence, have something to do with the matter. But, whatever the means for accomplishing this end, the end itself is indispensable. The scholar's tongue must be unloosed, as well as the teacher's. The scholar's thoughts must be broached, as well as the teacher's. Indeed, the statement needs very little qualification or abatement, that a scholar has learned nothing from us except what he has expressed to us again in words. The teacher who is accustomed to harangue his scholars with a continuous stream of words, no matter how full of weighty meaning his words may be, is yet deceiving himself, if he thinks that his scholars are materially benefited by his intellectual activity, unless it is so guided as to awaken and exercise theirs. If, after a suitable period, he will honestly examine his scholars on the subjects, on which he has himself been so productive, he will find that he has been only pouring water into a sieve. Teaching can never be this one-sided process. Of all the things we attempt, it is the one most essentially and necessarily a cooperative process. There must be the joint action of the teacher's mind and the scholar's mind. A teacher teaches at all, only so far as he causes this co-active energy of the pupil's mind.

Wicked men stumble over straws in the way to heaven, but climb over hills in the way to destruction.