

Normal Department.

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT-BOOK.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER'S HANDBOOK; or, The Principles and Practice of Teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School, by Thomas Morrison, M. A., L. L. D., Principal Free Church Training College, Glasgow,

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PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING. (CHAPTER V.)

Definition of Principles. Principles are fundamental truths from which other truths are derived that can be applied as guides to human conduct.

Principle I. In Teaching we must always begin with the known and proceed to what is unknown; that is, instruction must always be based upon some idea already in the mind of the pupil.—This principle is of vital importance, and is of universal application in education both sacred and secular. It is an established fact that when the mind receives an impression it refers it to a previous received impression that happens to resemble it. Thus every new impression is interpreted by means of old ones, and nothing can be really known or recognized until reference and comparison have been made to something previously known. Besides the mind has a liking for what it knows, and this liking extends itself to all that can be connected with the object. This principle was employed by the Apostles in addressing the Jews. See Acts 2: 14-36; Acts 13: 17-41; Acts 14: 15-17; Rom. 1: 18-32.

Principle II. The Teacher should understand the order in which the faculties of children are unfolded, because the wisest teaching will be directed to those powers that are conspicuously active at the time. The teacher must adapt his teaching to the age and capacity of the pupils.—This principle may be illustrated from the teaching of Our Lord. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16: 12. See also Matt. 4: 33. The mind of the child consists at first of few active faculties. In young children the memory and the imagination are the controlling powers. Comparing, judging and reasoning come at a later period.

Principle III. In communicating knowledge, whether religious or secular, we should start from the concrete and end with the abstract.—This was the method of the Great Teacher. The mind of the child can only grasp the abstract through the concrete.

Principle IV. The acquisition of Religious Knowledge by the child should accord in mode and arrangement with the way in which mankind has acquired religious ideas.—God has dealt with the world as a judicious teacher deals with his pupils. A careful study of the way in which truth was revealed during old Testament time will greatly aid the teacher in helping his pupils to acquire the same truths.

Principle V. Our Teaching should be such as to foster the principles of self-development, self-instruction and self-activity to the fullest extent. The pupil must cooperate with the teacher.—The following corollaries naturally follow from this principle:—

(1) Tell the pupil as little as possible and lead him to discover as much as possible. The connection between *doing* and *knowing* is deep and far reaching. We learn to *do* by knowing and to *know* by doing.

(2) Never do for the pupil what you can lead him to do for himself.

(3) The *less* the teacher talks to the pupil, and the *more* the pupil talks to the teacher the better will be the teaching.

Principle VI. Instruction should always excite the interest of the pupils, and therefore be pleasurable to them.—If the pupil is not interested there is something wrong, either in the method of teaching, or in the subject not being suited to the age and capacity of the pupil. Experience has abundantly shown there is always a method to be found productive of interest—even of delight—and for this method the Sabbath School Teacher must diligently seek.

Principle VII. In teaching definitions and general statements we should first carefully teach the meaning of all the terms used, and then the individual truths on which the definitions and statements are founded. That is, definitions and general statements should be taught inductively. The inductive should lead up to the definition and general statement. By induction we mean the process of drawing a general conclusion from a sufficient number of *particulars*.

While this Principle is of general application in all teaching, in Sabbath School teaching it especially applies to teaching the Shorter Catechism. The usual method is to commit the question, then give the Scripture proofs. The reverse of this is the correct method. The