

THE PASTOR LEADING HIS TEACHERS IN  
THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS PEDAGOGY.\*

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BY REV. A. H. M'KINNEY.  
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The good man was in his study all the morning, preparing for the mid-week prayer meeting. He had studied, prayed and communed much. He had ascended the heights and he felt confident that he had a message to which his people would listen and from which they would derive great benefit. Under the inspiration of his preparation, he does his very best in delivering the message, but his efforts seem to be fruitless. It is as much as some of his hearers can do to keep awake, while the faces of others plainly indicate that they are listening more because of habit than because they are really interested.

The pastor goes to bed, tossing about, as he prays and questions himself as to why his well-prepared message failed to arouse his people. He blames them; then he blames himself, but there is no satisfaction in either course of procedure. He gets nothing to help him in his preparation for the next prayer meeting.

Wherein lay the fault? Not in the pastor's preparation, but in his ignorance of, or neglect of, a well known pedagogical principle, that known as apperception. According to this principle it is impossible to make any impression on the mind unless there is something in the mind upon which the fact or truth to be learned may be placed.

The following account of an unsuccessful attempt to illustrate "the love of God" proves the necessity for the recognition and the application of this principle:

I had taught the class for about six weeks, and had gotten on well with all the boys, except one, who was about thirteen years of age, and who seemed to be interested in the topic of the day until the time came for making the personal application. For example, the thought was, "God is love." I wished to illustrate it, and I would say to my boy: "Albert, God loves you. He loves you more than

your father loves you." Then there came into the boy's eye a look that I could not understand. It was hard and cold. Sometimes there was a sneer on his face and I imagined that my boy did not care to learn about the love of God.

One Sunday afternoon he was absent from the class, and the next morning I was irresistibly impelled to visit his home. On entering the room in the rear tenement, to my surprise, I found that the boy was there instead of at school. His mother was very silent and reserved. After repeated efforts to engage her in conversation, I said to myself, "That is what is the matter with Albert; he takes after his mother." But the Spirit said to me, "That is not all; there is some other reason for the boy's actions." So I chatted as pleasantly as I could to the woman, who responded in monosyllables. Suddenly, without any apparent cause, she burst out weeping, and said: "Don't be hard on my boy." I replied: "I am not hard on your boy. I love him. That is the reason I am here this morning instead of being at my work."

Again I went on talking, while the woman merely said "yes" or "no," as occasion demanded. Again, apparently without any reason she burst out crying. When she could control herself she said: "I must tell somebody; I may as well tell you as anybody else. My boy and I spent the night out in that alley way, and his father was in this room crazy drunk, threatening to kill us with a bread knife if either of us came into the room." Then it was as if the heavens had opened to give me light. I had been trying to teach the boy that God loved him, and had foolishly illustrated that love by a father's love. He had no father. A brute lived in the same house with him. Was it any wonder that he did not want God's love? Afterward, however, when I could take my boy aside and say to him, "Albert, God loves you more than your mother loves you," he understood just what I meant, and responded to my teachings.

That God is love is a grand truth; but that we are illustrating that truth in the right way is a question. Perhaps some with whom we have to deal do not know of the love of God because of our lack of wisdom in presenting

that love. The principle of apperception will help us here as elsewhere.

It is not a rare occurrence to meet a pastor who declares that in spite of his studious preparation for preaching and his earnest delivery of what he has prepared, the members of his congregation seem to have very hazy notions concerning the fundamental truths and great facts of their religion. This, alas! in many places is only too true. Wherein lies the blame? Far be it from me to assume to answer that question adequately. The suggestion is made, however, that perhaps the preacher has ignored another great principle of pedagogy, namely, that principle known as the principle of correlation.

Some preachers have attempted to ascertain how much of a certain sermon was grasped by the people; whether the salient points were apprehended. Such attempts have frequently resulted in humiliation to the preacher. Were others of his ministerial brethren to make similar experiments, chagrin would be a mild word to describe the result. Why is there such a lack of apprehension of the contents of even the best sermons on the part of the most intelligent hearers? Is it an indication that their intelligence has been overestimated? In some cases it may be so, but most frequently the fault lies in the preacher, who violates a third great principle of pedagogy, that known as the principle of concentration.

If the average pastor is so unfamiliar with the principles of pedagogy it would seem hopeless in attempting to persuade him to become the leader of his teachers in their study and application of these principles. But one of the aims of this series of lectures is to convince pastors of the great help that a knowledge of these principles will be to them in their own work. Once they have grasped, and have begun to apply them in their preaching and lecturing, the value thereof will be so self-evident that they will go on to future study and experiment for themselves and become the inspirers and perhaps the leaders of their Bible school teachers in this most important science.

To do this requires first of all the willing mind. The pastor who realizes the need of the application of pedagogical principles to his own work and to that of his

Bible school teachers, must have as his first and chief preparation the willingness to be a leader in the study and application of these principles.

It is said that years ago when one of our great universities was a small college there was a vacancy in the department of geology. A young man applied for an appointment as instructor. He was asked if he knew much about the subject in which instruction was to be given. He replied that he did not, but that he was full of enthusiasm for the subject, that he was willing to study hard and to make experiments and that he knew sufficient to keep so far ahead of his class that he would be able to lead them. He obtained the coveted appointment. He lived up to his promises, making a first-class instructor because he was a fellow-student with the members of his classes. He knew enough to lead them and did not overlook the fact that they did not know very much geology. He afterwards became one of the most distinguished professors in his subject.

Is there not a hint here for those who would become leaders in the study of pedagogy in connection with the Bible school? Shall we not so seriously ponder this hint, that in the years to come our Bible schools will show the result of our acting upon it?

The definite question for our consideration in this lecture is: How shall the pastor lead his teachers in the study of religious pedagogy?

Suggestively, a sixfold answer is offered to this question:

**I. THERE ARE GREAT FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF PEDAGOGY, WHICH ARE APPLICABLE TO RELIGIOUS WORK.** Having accepted this statement as a fact, the pastor should make up his mind that he will grasp and apply these principles in his own work as a teacher and preacher. At first, he need not be concerned with many principles. A veteran, successful, day-school teacher once declared that all pedagogy might be comprehended in three principles. Many teachers of religious truths have accepted these three, and have found them admirable for a beginning. They are the three referred to in the foregoing, namely:

- (1) The Principle of Apperception.
- (2) The Principle of Correlation.

**(3) The Principle of Concentration.**

Beginning with the three and carefully considering the results of their proper application, the pastor will find himself greatly helped in his work and may become a great help to his Bible school teachers. From time to time, it will be very easy for him to make additions to his collection of principles, providing he has laid the foundation properly.

II. FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF PEDAGOGY THERE MAY BE DEDUCED RULES APPLICABLE TO RELIGIOUS WORK. It must ever be borne in mind that a principle is always more important than any rule. At the same time, when the principle is understood, the rule or rules that are deduced from it may be very helpful.

John M. Gregory was at one time a day-school teacher, then a superintendent of public instruction, and afterwards a college president. As the result of his long experience in teaching, he formulated a series of laws which are as applicable in the Bible school as they are in the day school. These are known as

**THE SEVEN LAWS OF TEACHING.****I. The Law of the Teacher.**

The teacher must know that which he would teach.

**II. The Law of the Learner.**

The learner must attend with interest to the fact or truth to be learned.

**III. The Law of the Language.**

The language used in teaching must be common to teacher and learner.

**IV. The Law of the Lesson.**

The truth to be taught must be learned through truth already known.

**V. The Law of the Teaching Process.**

Excite and direct the self-activities of the learner, and tell him nothing that he can learn himself.

**VI. The Law of the Learning Process.**

The learner must reproduce in his own mind the truth to be acquired.

**VII. The Law of Review.**

The completion, test and confirmation of teaching must be made by reviews.

Any teacher who will paste a copy of these laws in his Bible, and from week to week test his methods of teaching by them, will gradually come to understand not only what mistakes he is making, but also how to overcome these mistakes. For example, a vast number of the mistakes made by our Bible school pupils may be traceable to the violation of Law III. on the part of our teachers. Many talk, and talk eloquently but produce small results because much of what they say is not understood.

III. PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES MAY BE EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED IN LANGUAGE UNDERSTOOD BY THE AVERAGE BIBLE SCHOOL TEACHER. Many scholars are so learned that it seems impossible for them to speak in the language of every-day life. They have vast funds of information but only a favored few have the benefit thereof, because of the methods by which attempts are made to convey it to others. Three teachers spent a week in examining two recent publications intended to help teachers. One was a two-volume work, written by a very learned man. The other was a small primer written by one not so learned. The verdict of the three teachers was—We have gotten more that is helpful out of the little primer than out of the two volumes. Why was this? Not because there was more in the primer, but because what it contained was put in such a way that the reader could easily understand it and make it his own.

Here is a field of almost limitless usefulness for the pastor. As he gets hold of great pedagogical truths and recognizes their value in his own work, he may so translate those truths that the youngest or least-educated teacher in his school will be able to understand their meaning. As a general thing the illustration will be of more value than the statement of the truth.

How few persons can get answers to their questions? The cause is frequently laid to the ignorance of the one questioned, whereas it is just as often the fault of the one asking the question. It will not be of much avail for the pastor to talk to his teachers about asking questions if he is not prepared to show by illustration what a good question is as well as to call attention to poor ones. Here

is a specimen of the sort of questions that should be avoided:

“Where is today’s lesson found?” Then came the answers:

“In the Bible.”

“In Acts.”

“In the Book of Acts.”

“Acts, eighteen.”

“Acts, eighteenth chapter and twenty-fourth verse.”

“In the twenty-fourth verse of the eighteenth chapter of Acts.”

To the visitor in the back of the schoolroom this seemed bad enough, but much worse was the fault-finding of the superintendent, who did not seem to realize that this was just what he ought to expect.

What could he have done? He could have so framed his questions that there could have been but one correct answer to each one. Here are specimen questions and answers:

From what book of the Bible is today’s lesson taken?

The Book of Acts.

From what chapter of Acts?

The eighteenth.

At what verse?

The twenty-fourth.

FOR  
PROPER  
QUESTIONING  
THERE  
ARE  
NEEDED

**P** REPARATION  
ERSPICUITY  
OINTEEDNESS  
IQUANCY  
ERSONALITY  
ATIENCE  
ERSEVERANCE  
RACTICE

Imagine a pastor taking a blackboard outline like the above and so mastering it that he can teach it to his Bible school workers, illustrating each point. Would he not derive great benefit himself? Would he not be greatly helping his teachers? This is a kind of pedagogy that is not only sensible, but also within the compass of every one who will use the brains with which God has endowed him.

IV. EXPERIMENTS IN PEDAGOGY SHOULD BE MADE IN THE BIBLE SCHOOL. Some may object to this statement on the score that the Bible school and the Lord's Day is neither the time nor the place for experiments. But consider how much experimentation is carried on all the time in our Bible school for no other reason than that our teachers do not know exactly what to do. From time to time, they try new plans, many of which have neither rhyme nor reason to support them. When a tried and approved principle is grasped or when a good rule has been evolved shall we not try it in order to ascertain how it will work? After being fairly tried, the results should be carefully noted and deduction made therefrom. This is the proper kind of experimentation. Let us see how it may be carried on in specific cases. There are many things which our study of humanity has led us to adopt as part of our working pedagogy. Recall some of the characteristics of your pupils:

(1) IMITATION. This trait is very strongly marked in our Primary pupils and is not altogether wanting in those who have long since been graduated from that department. What pedagogical value has our knowledge of the fact that our little ones are imitators? Emerson uttered not merely a pedagogical but a universal truth when he declared "What you are, speaks so loud that I can not hear what you say." Value! Who is able to estimate the value of this fact in our Bible school work, especially work among little children?

Is a teacher fussy, talkative, noisy, disorderly? In these things her pupils will imitate her not only within but also without, the walls of the class room.

Is a teacher quiet, self-composed, reverent? Then the power of imitation will lead the little ones in a very marked degree to be as she is.

Listen to a teacher leading in the recital of the Lord's Prayer. The pupils use almost exactly the same tone of voice that she employs.

Watch those children! They are playing Sunday school. Look carefully at their acting, and you can form a tolerably correct idea of how their teacher conducts her school service. Catch their leader's tone of voice, and you may imagine how the teacher uses her voice in the class room.



Do you want a child to do a certain thing? Do it yourself. Do you want a child to be a certain thing? Be it yourself.

You say, This is nothing new to us? Is this religious pedagogy? It is, and it is as old as the time of the great Teacher himself who taught his disciples, not so much by telling them what to do as by showing them what he was and how he acted. All we need is to have these simple, but everlastingly important, facts called to our attention in order to recognize their worth. Shall we not go farther while we put them in operation—inspire our teachers to experiment with them in the class room? Blessed is the Bible school which has a pastor who will lead his teachers in experimenting in pedagogy in order to better teaching.

(2) IMAGINATION. One of the most active powers of the child's mind from the standpoint of pedagogy is his imagination. For the teacher who knows the facts, the possibilities within her reach in this field are numberless. If she *sees* a picture, she can get the little ones to imagine that picture; so with facts or truths.

"Mother, there is a robber in the house."

"No, dear, there is not."

"Mother, I tell you there is a great, big robber in this house."

"You are mistaken; there is no robber here."

"But mother, there is a robber in this house."

To soothe her little one the mother thought she would humor him, so she asked, "What does he look like?" Then followed a description of the robber so complete and so thrilling that the mother was alarmed. His size, his face, his clothing, his arms were all described so minutely that it seemed as if the boy were looking at the robber as he spoke. At this juncture the father came in, and, as the mother, out of hearing of the boy, narrated the story and expressed her fears, he burst out laughing, as if the whole matter were a great joke. To his astonished wife he explained that on a bill-board not far from the house was the picture of a robber just such as the boy had described. With his vivid imagination aflame it was but natural that the picture should make a strong impression upon the little fellow and that he should bring it home.

Had he been accused of untruthfulness, he would have stuck to his story because he really saw that robber in the house.

Let a pastor understand what he can do with the imagination of a little child and he will have a lever for lifting that one into realms of knowledge with which he ought to be familiar. Led by the pastor the teacher may experiment until she, too, masters the secret of how to make use of her pupils' imagination in the impartation of biblical facts and spiritual truths.

(3) CURIOSITY. Any person who has had much to do with little children knows that curiosity is a very marked characteristic of their make-up. Indeed, it is reported on credible authority that there are persons nearer their second childhood than their first who have never gotten their curiosity fully satisfied. However, from the standpoint of the teacher, to know that the child is curious amounts to but very little unless one knows how to make use of that curiosity in the impartation of those things for which the Bible school stands.

I hand one of you young gentlemen a newspaper, saying, "There is something that will interest you." You take it, look at it, and then look at me. I ask, "What is the matter?" You respond, "This is last week's paper; I read it some days ago." Do I chide you for not wanting to read it again? No, indeed, I blame myself for being so stupid as to expect you to be interested in news a week old.

What frequently takes place in the Primary department? The teacher has a picture roll on which is some scene connected with the lesson of the day. Before the children arrive she very carefully exposes the roll to view, arranging the frame so that the picture will be visible to the largest possible number of pupils. They come in, one at a time, by twos and threes. They take their seats and, urged on by their curiosity, look at the picture. Because their receptive powers are strong, in a few minutes they take in all that they are able to get out of the picture. From time to time they glance at it, and each time it becomes less interesting to them because their curiosity concerning it has been satisfied.

It is the time for lesson study. Teacher turns to the

picture which means so much to her and to which she has given much study. She is surprised that the scholars are inattentive, that they do not seem to appreciate the picture. Her efforts to get them interested result in nothing but nerve wear and tear for herself. Wherein lies the difficulty? In the teacher, most assuredly. She has given the children last week's newspaper and they are not at all pleased with it. Long ago they had gotten out of the picture all they desired. Long ago they had discounted what she so earnestly tried to say. Can you blame these little ones?

Some one inquires, What should the teacher do? Banish the picture roll from the class room? By no means. She should make of it a most valuable adjunct to her teaching. In order to do this, she must understand that her pupils are curious, and that their curiosity may be made one of her strongest allies in teaching. Instead of exposing to the pupils' view the picture on the lesson for the day, she should take pains to let her pupils know that she is concealing something from them. This will sharpen their curiosity. If, as she ought to be, she is on good terms with them, one of them will come up to her and something like the following dialogue will take place:

"Have you got a picture there, teacher?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Is it a nice one?"

"Yes, it is a very fine picture. I think that you will be very much pleased to see it."

"Will you let me look at it?"

"Certainly; go to your seat, be a good boy, and bye and bye I will show you this beautiful picture."

The little fellow returns to his seat and informs the one next him that teacher has a nice picture and that she is going to show it to them soon. This information is passed to others and they fairly quiver with curiosity to know what the picture is. They wonder and speculate and the more they do so, the more anxious are they to see the picture.

The time for teaching arrives. After a few preliminary sentences tending to arouse further curiosity in the picture, the teacher exposes it, and while the curiosity

of the children directs to it not only their eyes but also their minds with absorbing interest, the story which it depicts is drawn and the lesson taught. Then the picture for that day has lost its value. It may afterwards be referred to very briefly for the purpose of recalling something in the minds of the children. Ah! fellow students of pedagogy, do we not realize the difference between last week's newspaper and the latest extra?

What is done with the picture roll may likewise be done with the blackboard objects, symbols, small pictures or anything else intended to attract and to hold the attention of the pupils. The pedagogical value of such materials is not so much in themselves as in the way in which they are employed. Do we not realize what possibilities lie within proper knowledge of, and the proper treatment of the curiosity of children?

V. THE RESULT OF PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENTS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AND COMPARED.

The pastor who is leading his teachers in experiments in pedagogy, having grasped the great truths connected with what may be done with the curiosity of children, gives his teachers a talk on the subject. Among his listeners is one who says, That is fine. I'll begin to appeal to the imagination of my boys. Accordingly she, during the week prepares herself and comes to her class on the Lord's Day conscious of her ability to apply what she has learned. She begins on her boys. They look at her and at one another stupidly. The stronger her appeals to their imagination, the less the effect produced. It would not be strange if one of the boys were to nudge his seat-mate in the ribs and say under his breath, "What's she giving us, anyhow?"

Discouraged, she goes home, and soon seeks an opportunity to tell her pastor that she tried what he advised in regard to making use of the imagination and that the attempt was a failure. A few questions by the intelligent, well informed pastor enables him to diagnose the case exactly. The following is a summary of what is said:

"How old are your boys?"

"They will average about eleven years of age."

"To whom was I talking about the pedagogical power of imagination, when you heard the address that made

you resolve to appeal to the imagination of your boys?"

"I thought you were talking to all the teachers."

"So I was, but I meant to impress the fact that the trait of imagination is of especial pedagogical value when instructing young children, especially those who are under nine years of age. Your boys are in the literal, matter-of-fact period, which is one of the marked characteristics of pupils of the Junior Department or of those between the ages of nine and twelve years."

Then the pastor comforts the teacher, gives her some points in reference to the method of teaching pupils of the age of those in her class, and she departs not only with more confidence than ever in her pastor, but also with a greater determination to be a better teacher.

Is there any more valuable work for the Master than this one of considering and comparing the results of pedagogical experiment, so as to be able to help his teachers in their work?

An ideal exercise would be for those gathered at a teachers' meeting to give to one another the results of experiments that they are making along certain pedagogical lines.

VI. A RECORD SHOULD BE KEPT OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED IN PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIMENTS. We all know how treacherous the memory is. It is well known that frequently the exception makes more impression upon the mind itself than does the rule. The teaching force of the school is constantly changing. For these and other reasons, it will be wise for the pastor, as he, in co-operation with his teachers, proves the value of a pedagogical principle, to make a record of that principle. So with rules that may be deduced from that principle. In a short time there would be gathered a series of principles the worth of which is understood by the teacher. These could be given to the young people who are being trained as teachers and to the new teachers entering the school, and by this simple method they could be kept from repeating the blunders of those who have gone before them. It is true that experience is our best teacher, but sensible is that one who is willing to profit by the experience of others.

One reason why such excellent work is done by teach-

ers in the Primary department is that they have learned the value of passing from one to another the results of what they have learned in their efforts to instruct the little ones. Let us take the hint from them. Let us keep a record of those things in pedagogy which we can mark "tried and approved," and let us turn this record over to each one in the congregation who is, or who may become a teacher.

If there is in the mind of any who are being addressed the slightest suspicion that all this is not biblical and in accord with the work of the true minister of Jesus Christ, I beseech you to study our Lord's methods as he approached various individuals. He was indeed the Master. He was a Master in his knowledge of humanity, for, we are told, he knew what was in man. More than this, he was in a pre-eminent degree a Master of Pedagogy. Although he never uses the term, his teachings give us the thing. Although apperception, correlation and concentration were words that were not current in his day, he taught according to the principles for which these words stand. Does any one doubt this? Let him study pedagogically the record of the Savior's interview with the woman of Samaria at the well. Note how the Great Teacher applied the principle of apperception in talking to the woman about something with which she was thoroughly familiar. Consider how he applied the principle of correlation by making everything she said contributory to the point that he wished to impress. That point was that he is the Christ. The principle of concentration was so well applied that the woman is led apparently without any effort on the part of the Master to accept his statement concerning the Christ: I that speak unto thee am he, and to go to her fellow townsmen and say, Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?

Although the Bible is not a text book on either psychology or pedagogy, it abounds in illustrations of the applications of the principles of both.

"My trouble," some one interposes, "is that I do not know how to get my teachers started in this great work of learning how to teach."

"My difficulty lies farther back than that," says another

er. "I do not see with all that I have to do how I am going to find time in which to make myself either the inspirer or the leader in this most important line of effort."

For the benefit of both classes permit me to repeat a story. It is entitled:

MRS. BROWN'S LEMON-RAISIN PIES.

Mrs. Brown's aunt was a maker of lemon-raisin pies whose fame was county wide. Her niece asked for the recipe. She gave it, and Mrs. Brown made some pies which, while passable, were not to be compared to her aunt's. She got some information with the result that the next lot were a little better. She kept on experimenting and asking questions and talking with her friends about how to make lemon-raisin pies until now she is an expert. I was going to ask: Are pies of more value than boys and girls? Are pies of more value than boys and girls? but I will not, as you see the moral.