

CONTINUING EDUCATION



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An Introduction to the Teaching Principles of Jesus Part I

By Reuben L. Hilde

PROFESSIONAL educators often think in terms of models. In educational research, efforts are made to identify ideal (or close to ideal) models in curriculum design, learning theory, values teaching, teaching strategies, classroom design, coping with discipline, and a variety of other areas of concern to the educator. A valid concern of Christian teachers is that of discovering how a Christian teacher should teach and relate to the learner. The ideal Model for every Christian teacher is Jesus of Nazareth. We have prepared two articles entitled "An Introduction to the Teaching Principles of Jesus" based on this premise. We acknowledge that it is important to look not only at His principles of teaching but at His message and His life itself. However, in these two studies we will focus on His teaching principles. His life is, of course, a part of His teaching, for "what He taught, He lived. . . . Thus in His life, Christ's words had perfect illustration and support. . . . Not only did He teach the truth, but He was the truth. It was this that gave His teaching power."—*Education*, pp. 78, 79.

GOAL: The purpose of this study is to identify and to examine the teaching principles of Jesus so that we might incorporate these principles into our teaching ministry.

OBJECTIVES: When you have completed your study of the information presented here, you will:

1. Recognize the importance of meditation and quiet reflective thought to effective teaching.

2. Describe the essential nature of personalized instruction.

* Approved by the North American Division Office of Education for 0.5 Continuing Education Units Credit or 5 Contact Hours.

Associate Director of Education
General Conference of SDA

3. Explain the use Jesus made of questions and how His approach differed from that of many today who employ the "inquiry method."

4. Distinguish between "teaching with authority" and that teaching which is authoritarian in nature.

5. Clarify the differences that may exist between the teaching of values and the approach known as "values clarification."

6. Describe "positive reinforcement" and how it may be used by the Christian teacher.

7. Identify the features found in an ideal learning "climate" or "atmosphere."

8. Explain why the principle of "appropriate practice" is important to the learner, and

identify some of the features of appropriate practice.

9. Evaluate the importance of goals and objectives in teaching *and* find examples in the Bible of objectives God has given His people.

10. Describe how Jesus dealt with people differently and show why this “individual differentiation” is not inconsistent or “unfair.”

11. Describe how Jesus organized His disciples in two or three incidents in His ministry and explain how these incidents provide an example for today’s educators.

12. Explain why the principle of “interaction” is important to the learning experience.

13. Seek to discover other teaching principles of Jesus that are not listed in this article (part 1).

Meditation

Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? (Luke 12:24).

Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these (verse 27).

But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you (verse 31).

“Set your mind upon his kingdom, and all the rest will come to you as well” (verse 31, N.E.B.).*

Jesus is asking us to take time for meditation, to consider, to muse. He wants us to reflect on the great truths to be found as we observe the simple things around us. He does not want us to miss the beautiful experiences of life, nor does He want us to overlook the lessons He has for us in nature.

In the twenty-four hours we call a day, there seems to be little sense in taking time to watch a robin hop across a lawn. And we certainly have better things to do than take the dog for a walk! Some of us have not watched an ant haul a bread crumb across a sidewalk in years—though somewhere back in antiquity an old king suggested that we take time to watch this tiny creature.

Morris L. Bigge, in his book *Learning Theories for Teachers*, page 233, identifies three levels of teaching that produce learning. From the lowest to the highest these are “memory level,” “un-

derstanding level,” and “reflection level.” At this highest level we are dealing with insights, creativity, problem solving, and testing of generalizations. We seek new solutions and ideas.

Note how often Jesus invites us to dwell at this level of the intellect. In this experience we are given insights into the great spiritual truths God has for us. Can we afford not to take time to “consider the lily”?

Whatever truth you desire to share with someone else, you will be most effective if the one with whom you are communicating sees that you have taken time to think the matter through. If he can see that you have pondered over that great truth and now hold it to be of real worth to your experience, he will value your thoughts.

One may ask at this point, “What does meditation or reflection have to do with teaching others?” It is in reflection that your own soul can be enriched. It is in this experience that you gain insights. And having seen the necessity for reflection and meditation, you will grant your hearer that same opportunity. You will be less likely to press your listener to a decision that he is not ready to make.

To “muse awhile” is a glorious privilege for which we should be thankful. The bard of antiquity who sat on a lonely hillside with his sheep before him had time for music and meditation. He could reflect upon the nature around him; he could view the stars in the heavens; he could watch the busy ant at work; and he could reflect upon the messages of God’s prophets whose words he had heard. He became rich in thought and in hope. He could view God as few have ever known Him.

Quiet meditation was not the privilege of the bard alone; the invitation is extended to us also to become rich in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

Few pictures are more appealing than that of a crackling fire in the fireplace, a comfortable chair, a good book, and a sharing friend to join in the quietness of the evening hour. It is at such times as these that we might witness with John, “(And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Personalized Instruction

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night (John 3:1, 2).

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink (chap. 4:6, 7).

The Saviour did not wait for congregations to assemble. Often He began His lessons with only a few gathered about Him.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 194.

The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought

* The quotes in this article marked N.E.B. are from *The New English Bible*, © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission.

home to every soul. To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 229.

With little more than three years allotted to His public ministry, Jesus would need to allocate His time to its most efficient use. Certainly He could never allow His time to be taken up by one or two individuals unless these individuals were people of great authority and position!

His mission being the redemption of mankind, He must reach the largest number in the shortest time; this would take careful management and planning. All individual encounters with unimportant people would be ruled out!

But to the dismay of His disciples and others, He wasted (they thought) His time with a Samaritan woman at a well, with a Syrophenician woman who pestered Him with some argument about dogs, and with a lady who should have been more considerate of her sister Martha.

Yet, in the face of this challenge to utilize His time most efficiently, our Lord "had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience."

"Individualized instruction" has become a cliché today, an issue over which educators debate and boast. Among the many "fads," it has its proponents and its opponents. It is hailed by some as the basic concern of educators; by others as a move away from the traditional, realistic issue of facing failure as a fact of life.

Opponents of this faddish "individualized" education fear that it soft-pedals responsibility; they view it as a sentimental concern on the part of those who tend to pamper learners. It is viewed as an attempt to bring success experiences to those who have not struggled for success or who have not earned it.

Yet, whatever our beliefs relating to educational techniques, we must recognize the supreme worth of the individual. Groups are not redeemed; nations are not redeemed; individuals are redeemed. Time dedicated to the needs of an individual is not wasted.

There should be a willingness to vary and to adjust the approaches according to the interests and needs of the hearers.

Where the teacher does not allot time for the individual learner, where the pastor does not visit individual members, where the doctor is too busy to give personalized instruction to his patient, and where father and mother are too preoccupied to share the personal heartaches and joys of their children, the priorities of such persons are not well ordered. And it is not difficult, even for the young, to recognize this lack of concern.

We need not only to recognize the *value* of the

one-soul audience but also to reflect on the *potential* of the one-soul audience.

Inquiry

One of the most effective methods of teaching is the careful and discriminating use of questions.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? . . . He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? (Matt. 16:13-15).

Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? (chap. 11:7).

Jesus presented Himself as one thirsting for a knowledge of God. His questions were suggestive of deep truths which had long been obscured, yet which were vital to the salvation of souls.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 78.

Jesus desired to awaken inquiry.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 20.

The modern "inquiry method" is not the same as the Socratic method made famous by the ancient Greek scholar. Socrates, through the artful use of questions, led his students to the answer he desired them to reach. The modern "inquiry teacher," in the most extreme approach to the inquiry method, is not interested in finding definite answers. In fact, he may not believe there are any. His concern is with teaching the student "to learn how to learn." He is "process oriented" in his teaching, as opposed to teachers largely interested in the "product." Whereas the conventional teacher is concerned largely with his students' learning of facts and skills, the inquiry teacher has little concern with the amount of facts a student may retain. The two extreme positions are the subject of much debate.

The difference between these two camps of educators is primarily one of emphasis. The process-oriented educator feels that too much emphasis has been placed on the learning of facts. The product-oriented educator, represented today most effectively by the career educator, contends that too much emphasis has been placed on theory, and, as a result, the learner who has received a high school diploma or a college degree has no identifiable skill or ability to make his way in the world.

As in most areas of life, the issue is one of balance.

Of all the great teachers this world has known, none has ever presented the balance so beautifully as has the Saviour. By His example in His youth He revealed the importance of learning and doing the practical things in life.

The perfect hands of the youthful Jesus were likely calloused, but His heart was not. He was in tune with, and keenly sensitive to, man's needs. He realized that man was not, generally, sensi-

tive to His own needs. Thus it was that “Jesus desired to awaken inquiry.” He sought to arouse in man a wholesome curiosity for truth. He stimulated men, even the commonest of them, to reflect on the great issues of life, on the nature of God, and on the concerns of salvation. He did much of this through questioning. Early in His life, at the age of 12, He asked questions of learned scholars. He did it, not to confound them, but to bring their hearts into contact with those truths “which were vital to the salvation of souls.”

How often have we in the past discouraged inquiry? How often has the questioner been rebuked for asking impudent questions?

Well-prepared questions can lead learners step by step toward the great goals of life. Whenever we desire to communicate effectively, it would be well to ask ourselves, “What is the goal to be reached in this study?” “What are the logical steps to take in reaching that goal?” (In other words, What are the objectives along the way?) When we have determined this, we can frame our questions so that they will lead to the accomplishment of the objective.

We may improve our communications further by learning to ask questions that elicit more significant and meaningful answers.

For example, if we ask questions that merely bring forth countless facts, we may not be improving the learning experiences of our hearers. Educators refer to this as merely *knowledge-level* or *memory-level* learning.

The point we wish to make here is that we can develop questions that will elicit answers of a higher level. It doesn’t take a highly trained individual to do this. Let us illustrate (using Bloom’s *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, in which the intellect is viewed at six levels):

First, if we ask the learner to “list ten items,” if we ask him to “name the thirteen Colonies,” we are dealing with the lowest level of the intellect—*knowledge*. It is not “wrong” to teach at this level; but learning at this level alone does not bring us to an understanding of the important issues of life.

The second level is the level of *comprehension*. Here the questions seek to determine the understanding a learner might have. Questions starting with “why” may accomplish this purpose. We might ask, “Why did Jesus rebuke Peter openly, while dealing with Judas in a quiet manner?”

At the next level one is expected not merely to understand an idea, but he is now asked to make an *application* of that idea to real life. A man may understand the steps to be taken in framing a house; now he is challenged to frame the house.

If you were to ask someone to identify the

mistakes the Israelites made in their covenant relationship with God, you would be asking him to *analyze* their experience. *Analysis* involves a task in which one identifies the significant factors or elements that contribute to a situation, to an experience, or to the discovery of significant parts of a particular entity.

The ability to put together, or assemble, various parts into a significant whole is the ability to *synthesize*. *Synthesis*, the gathering together of these significant parts, borders on creativity.

At the top of this intellectual sequence is *evaluation*. After one has analyzed certain issues, and after he has brought together the significant elements (synthesis), he may have reason to make evaluations.

When Jesus asks, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” He expects us to make an evaluation. And, hopefully, man, after analyzing the fundamental issues of life, and after putting together the picture of truth as depicted in the Scriptures, will make the best decision.

Now, as we review these levels of the intellect (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), it would be foolish to become mechanical and to set up questions deliberately at each level just for the sake of being intellectually challenging. On the other hand, “Jesus desired to awaken inquiry.” Thus it is far better to ask significant questions that will lead the learner to truth and to his own decision relating to that truth—better than to “indoctrinate” the individual by telling him all the answers.

Somehow, we can’t help believing that should you assist the hearer in the process of discovering truth, in his learning how to keep on growing, you will inevitably have a better *product* than you would were you to deny him the privilege of “thinking for himself.”

Teaching With Authority

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matt. 7:28, 29).

In His teaching there was an earnestness that sent His words home with convicting power.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 365.

Christ’s manner of teaching was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterized by simplicity.—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 240.

Webster’s New Dictionary of Synonyms describes the authoritarian role with such words as these: dogmatic, dictatorial, magisterial, totalitarian. It then lists as analogous or “near” synonyms these words: despotic, autocratic, arbitrary, tyrannical, domineering, imperious, masterful.

Imagine Jesus establishing such a climate for

learning! Preposterous, isn't it? None of the words depicting the authoritarian role would describe the manner of Jesus' teaching.

In the lists of synonyms for the word *authority*, however, some very acceptable words come on the scene; many of them fit the role of Jesus the teacher. Note the following: power, jurisdiction, command, control, dominion, sway. Exemplar, ideal, standard, pattern, model, and example are listed as analogous words.

We can readily view Jesus in His teaching role as one who taught with power, as one who was in command, as one who had every thought and word under control. And we are happy to view Him as the ideal, the standard, the pattern, the model, and the example.

Perhaps we need to examine more fully the meaning of the scripture that states that Jesus "taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

We need to ask ourselves, "What was the authority that Jesus exercised?" Furthermore, "How did He manifest this authority?"

The writings of Ellen White give us several clues in our efforts to identify the "authority of Jesus."

1. *The authority of sincerity.*

"In His teaching there was an earnestness that sent His words home with convicting power." If ever a listener were to discover that a speaker did not mean what he said, did not believe what he was saying, or did not care too much whether or not people were actually able to get his message, that speaker would have little or no influence upon his hearers.

Jesus possessed the authority of sincerity. That which He uttered He believed; and that which He believed He earnestly desired to share with others.

2. *The authority of simplicity.*

"Christ's manner of teaching was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterized by simplicity."

Whether motivated by pride or by a mistaken notion of the importance of big words and complex phrases, most of us are guilty from time to time of employing terms and expressions difficult for our audiences to understand. But the true teacher will whenever possible, like Jesus, make learning easy.

There are expressions also that add beauty to the thought to be communicated. If such usage were to be forbidden, we would need to set aside the work of the poets and reject much of the great literature. Consider this example: We could say, "Jesus loved the world far more than we can ever imagine." Or, "Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity."—*Education*, p. 76. The first statement is true;

however, the second statement puts Christ's love into the dimension of eternity, using sublime prose not easily forgotten.

Let us introduce a parenthetical thought here concerning usage of words peculiar to a certain discipline or profession. There are terms in any profession that should be understood by the members of that profession.

It is often the beauty of the text that assists us in remembering it. And if beauty accomplishes it, then it has its place in the task of communication. If beauty assists in the communication of an idea, then it cannot be viewed as working counter to the authority of simplicity.

3. *The authority of faith and confidence in the Word of God.*

"The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite. . . . But Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 253.

Jesus would have us accept the Bible as the inspired (God-breathed) Word of God. The many philosophies in the world today have their varied attractions, but almost all of them share a common weakness; they are not built upon any sure and positive source of authority. That is why counsel has been given us to accept the Bible as the authority upon which to base all our religious communications: "But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. . . . Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 595.

4. *The authority of love.*

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Immediately following this beautiful text in which God's love for the world is expressed, the Scriptures declare, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (verse 17).

Love is the foundation upon which God's authority is built. Love assessed this lost world as worth saving. Love, the central principle of God's character, was the motivating factor in the plan of redemption. Love gives us the power to respond to God's plan, and love brings about the healing of the great wound that sin has slashed on the face of the universe.

Authoritarianism, appearing almost as a twin sister to authority, is the great counterfeit that threatens to insinuate itself into the experiences of those who would communicate the good news

of the gospel. As we return to some of the words to depict the authoritarian role, we find it impossible to use these words to depict the authority of Jesus. Jesus was not dictatorial; He was not arbitrary; we certainly could not depict Him as tyrannical; and totalitarian does not fit into our thoughts at all when we consider the character of Christ.

Yet, in our great desire to bring people to Christ, we often introduce practices identified more with authoritarianism than with Christ's authority.

How can we distinguish between an authoritarian approach and that authority that God would have us exemplify? Though a number of factors could be kept in mind, it seems sufficient to relate this question to the following statement found in the book *Education*, page 17: "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. . . . It is the work of true education to develop this power; to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought."

Analyzing this quotation, we note four basic points regarding the individual: (1) each individual is to have his individuality; (2) each is to develop his power to think; (3) thinking should be followed by doing—suggesting the close relationship between theory and practice; (4) no person is to be a mere reflector of other men's thought.

We may use these four principles as criteria to assist us in distinguishing between the authoritarian approach and the approach that God would have us use in communicating with our fellow men.

We get a glimpse of the beautiful character of God when we recognize that God Himself would not take away man's right to think and to do. He neither forces the will nor breaks it. What He does is to establish a climate in which it becomes easy for man to respond to God's thought and to God's directions.

This view of God's character is depicted in Deuteronomy 30:19: "I have set before you life and death . . . : therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

Teaching Values

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it (Matt. 13:45, 46).

For many years educators in the United States and in other parts of the world have formed into two camps regarding the task of the school. One camp has held the position that it is the

duty of the school to educate the whole child. The other camp has asserted that the school's task is to deal only with the intellect. This latter group holds the view that it is the task of the church and the home to meet the spiritual and moral needs of the learner.

In America it is the former group that has gained the ascendancy; most educators recognize the school's responsibility in meeting the needs of the whole child. However, in recent years the emphasis on teaching values has taken a new turn. Much of the literature in this area comes under the heading of "values clarification." On first view, the position appears to be very acceptable. We do desire not only to assist every child in clarifying and understanding his values, but also to help the child apply those values to his daily life.

One major deficiency of this values-clarification approach does not surface immediately. But on closer investigation it can be seen that many of the proponents of values clarification do not believe in teaching students the long and well-established values of society. They do not believe in imposing upon the young mind the values of the church; they would not dogmatize or teach doctrine as such. They view their task merely as that of assisting the child to identify his own values.

The outgrowth of such an approach to the teaching of values is for each "to do his own thing." Everybody does that which is right in his own eyes. With such a position, a pragmatic view of truth is developed; eternal verities, or unchanging principles, are rejected. The proponents of values clarification speak of truth for today, or that which is truth for each particular individual.

The Bible of course does speak of "present truth," but it does not reject eternal truths.

The Christian who accepts the Bible as the source of truth, and as containing the standard for all truth, will need to reject the popular concept of values clarification as insufficient and, in some cases, misleading. On the other hand, if in our communication we do not transmit values, we are missing the whole point of our task.

The basic issues of the Bible are value issues—good versus evil, truth versus error, right versus wrong, love versus hate, health versus sickness, and life versus death.

Our Saviour put forth values in the natural setting of His love and concern for fallen man. He said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for

his soul?" (chap. 16:25, 26).

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Throughout the Scriptures, effective communication deals with far more than mere intellectual matters:

"If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).

It should be quite obvious to all that the process of decision making itself involves the issue of values. We select one or another. As this decision-making process is identified, it becomes clear that not only would the Lord have us clarify our own values (and He helps us to do this on occasion by asking very significant questions), but He would have us establish values in their proper order.

In His teaching, Jesus did not oppose a number of values that people of the world in His day (as well as in our day) upheld and cherished, but He did suggest that these values be placed in proper order. This is seen in His discourse found in Luke 12, which deals with our concern for food and clothing, et cetera. He concludes with this admonition, "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Luke 12:31).

We should notice here that at the top of this priority list of values is "the kingdom of God." When this is placed in its proper position, the other needed values will be supplied. If our teaching is to be effective, we must assist our hearers in this task of establishing priorities. Not only should we have the hearer identify his own values, we should help him identify the values our Lord set forth and help him to accept those as of supreme importance.

Positive Reinforcement

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord (Matt. 25:21).

And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more (John 8:11).

Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 16:17).

A little child becomes all too familiar with "no, no." A little later the word becomes "don't." If the parent or the teacher becomes more bedraggled and nervous, he bounces such expressions as "stop," "cut it out," and "would you please be quiet" off the child with increased regularity. The child learns to shrug these off with an ease equivalent to the proverbial "water off the duck's back." But the conscientious parent and teacher cannot shrug off their misgivings so easily; their negatives bring to them the realization that they don't sound as though they love the child.

If parents and teachers were to have played back to them tapes of their conversations with their children through the years, they would likely be appalled at the large number of negatives they have employed.

Researchers have found that negative requests and commands actually increase the undesirable behavior. When the undesirable behavior increases, the negative commands increase, and a vicious cycle develops.

In recent years proponents of what is known as "behavior modification" have been growing in number. Behavior modification is, in simplest terms, merely a practice of emphasizing the good and of rewarding the positive or appropriate behavior. Negative, or inappropriate behavior, is essentially ignored. There was a popular ditty in the days of World War II that suggested that we need to "accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative." This is essentially what behavior modification does.

In behavior modification, the giving of rewards figures large. Rewards for small children in this approach often consist of pieces of candy, or gum, given at the time the appropriate behavior is demonstrated. In other more sophisticated approaches tokens may be given, which may be turned in at the noon hour, or at some other time, for the reward desired. An even more sophisticated approach is to reward the child with a compliment or a pat on the back.

Various studies have been made of behavior modification. Generally, the conclusions have been favorable.

The Christian should view behavior modification with a degree of caution. Several reasons might be cited, among them the following:

1. Behavior modification stems from a basic position known to many as behaviorism. One of the leading proponents of behaviorism today is B. F. Skinner. Behaviorism suggests that freedom is not a realistic goal—perhaps not even a desirable goal. Skinner, in his book *Walden II*, describes a society that is designed by a group of leaders and into which the people are pro-

grammed. Freedom is not the issue; the people are programmed to fit the requirements and the practices of that particular society.

Programmed instruction, which likely had its birth at the time Pavlov experimented with his dogs, is based upon the stimulus-response theory of learning. From this S-R concept several theories have emerged. Among these is the operant conditioning of B. F. Skinner and others. Operant conditioning involves the reward that is prominent in the behavior-modification approach. Carried to its ultimate conclusion, this concept of learning is exceedingly depressing, for it takes away from man his individual dignity and the meaning of freedom.

2. Another caution against behavior modification seems necessary because of the attitude that the proponent of behavior modification will likely maintain toward punishment. There are those who are so against punishment that they would remove all jails and prisons from our society; these view punishment as vindictive and wrong. Of course, if punishment is vindictive and vengeful, then it is wrong. Perhaps punishment is a harsh word today, but this is owing largely to its misapplication.

There are those who are so opposed to punishment that even the word *obedience* becomes objectionable.

As in other areas of teaching, the beautiful balance of Jesus is shown in His appropriate uses of reward and rebuke. Jesus did not hesitate to reward the servant for faithful service. In doing so, He employed both immediate commendations and promise of future reward. But Jesus also rebuked His servants. However, even in His rebukes, He communicated compassion and love. So, whether Jesus rewarded or rebuked, it was clearly seen that He had the interest, the welfare, and the redemption of His hearer in mind.

The Learning Climate

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. 11:28-30).

Christ desires by the fullness of His power so to strengthen His people that through them the whole world shall be encircled with an atmosphere of grace.—Testimonies, vol. 7, p. 148.

Have you ever noticed the vigor with which the young child in the early grades of school waves his arm in an almost-frantic desire to answer the teacher's question? Ofttimes the child must be taught restraint and to "tone down" his unbridled enthusiasm.

A few years later, the youth, no longer a child, has lost his outward enthusiasm for classroom activities. Now, with the added pressure of his

peers, he exercises restraint and replaces his former enthusiasm with a teen-age boredom. The desire to "please the teacher" is no longer a priority item in his life.

As we go up the academic scale, into the college classroom and seminars of graduate work, we find another stance of the student. In this setting he doesn't hide his desire to learn, but he occupies himself with notetaking. He avoids participating in class discussions and in the interaction opportunities with fellow students and teacher.

On numerous occasions we have observed graduate students who have actually been afraid to "speak up" in class.

A further fear, that of asking questions, is perhaps the greatest barrier to effective learning in the classroom.

If such conditions exist in classrooms (and these conditions are common, rather than rare), we need to ask simply, "Why?"

Could you believe that students may experience fear of some classroom settings? Can a classroom have an authoritarian climate that actually causes students to keep their opinions and to "head for cover" intellectually?

Could the teacher's opinion ever be so strong as to cause the student to pull back—to hide intellectually?

You and I would find it difficult to imagine Jesus presenting all the great truths that He did in a cold, factual, authoritarian manner. It was the exceedingly gracious manner of Jesus that attracted people to Him before they fully understood His intentions or what He had to say. His was a climate of peace, joy, and love; a climate in which people would even forget their hunger in their desire to hear what He had to say and to be in His presence.

We would do well to ask ourselves the question "What are the elements of the climate we are to establish?"

We need to study briefly five identifiable factors in a communicating climate:

1. *Freedom.* Freedom, as it relates to communication, involves freedom to respond in an honest manner.

When we fail to allow such freedoms, we force the listener to go underground intellectually. When this takes place, we are unable to determine the listener's actual response.

Thus, in our failure to grant freedom of response, we are imprisoned by our own self-deception.

Freedom, then, involves freedom from *repression*—that repression which would cause honest response to go underground. It involves freedom from *rejection*; the learner or listener who does not accept an idea presented should

not in any way be rejected.

Freedom also involves freedom from *retaliation* or *retribution*. How many teachers have tipped the scale toward a bad grade or a good grade simply on the basis of the "apparent" attitudes of the students!

2. *Understanding*. Not only does the communicator of truth allow the listener freedom but he seeks to understand the listener. In his manner toward his hearer he demonstrates whether or not he has understanding. Perhaps few words are more comforting to a distressed soul than the simple statement "I understand."

3. *Opportunity and success*. Careful students of education today tend to believe that every learner must be given an opportunity to succeed. It should be understood that the "opportunity for success" people are not saying that men cannot fail. They are saying that we should not place learners in an atmosphere of failure.

4. *Acceptance and love*. Realizing that the entire plan of salvation is based on love, it should go without saying that those who participate in carrying the good news of salvation must also love those who are in need of redemption. This is not always easy. Teachers can testify to the difficulty in dealing with some students. If, however, we live and move in an atmosphere of grace, we will accept each hearer regardless of how "unlovely" his traits may be.

We cannot save those whom we reject. We cannot help effectively those whom we dislike. We cannot give ourselves for those whom we hate. On the other hand, when we accept a hearer, we are often surprised to see how acceptable he really is.

Acceptance is a form of love. Jesus accepted people as they were. But in that acceptance He gave them the prescription for becoming what they should be. His acceptance did not condone their practices.

On numerous occasions Jesus revealed how His *agapē* love accepted people who to others were very undesirable—for example, the woman taken in adultery. Can we ever forget His statement to her: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more"?

5. *Joy*. If we have incorporated the preceding elements into the atmosphere (or climate) that we are desiring to establish, then the logical outcome is joy.

But do we have the right to give to any or all who would hear us hope for rejoicing? For an affirmative answer we need only go back to that great event that took place just outside of Bethlehem more than 1,900 years ago:

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the

Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:8-11).

Note this basic message found in these verses. The news of a Saviour was to be a source of "great joy, which shall be to all people." The great joy is for *all* because the news of salvation is for *all*. God made provision for the salvation of all mankind.

Appropriate Practice

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits (Mark 6:7).

The apostles were members of the family of Jesus, and they had accompanied Him as He traveled on foot through Galilee. They had shared with Him the toils and hardships that overtook them. . . . They were still in need of much instruction, great patience and tenderness. Now, while He was personally with them, to point out their errors, and counsel and correct them, the Saviour sent them forth as His representatives.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 349.

Most people who have played any game involving a ball have received instruction or have told themselves to keep their eyes on the ball. Golfers are instructed to keep their head down when hitting the ball; participants in other games are told to keep their eyes on the ball when attempting to catch it or hit it. Invariably, however, in an endeavor to gain some advantage over the opponent, the player will take his eye off the ball just before making contact with it or just before catching it. When that takes place, the play often fails, or an error is made. Incorrect habits, gained through inappropriate practice, are difficult to overcome.

The statement "Practice makes perfect" is misleading; the adjective "appropriate" needs to be added. In fact, practice that is not appropriate is often worse than no practice at all. It is surprising how little attention this fact gets in education and in other professions involving communication and the development of skills.

On the college and secondary levels students are examined periodically for the purpose of evaluating their progress in their course work; but often results are not made known to the learner until a long time after the examination. Meanwhile, the student may go on believing certain misconceptions or practicing in an inappropriate manner. Wrong practices and incorrect beliefs are reinforced, causing students to go through a long process of unlearning their mistakes when they do get their examination results. On the elementary level of education

the “feedback” is generally almost immediate, thus preventing most wrong practices on the part of the children.

Thus, from the viewpoint of formal education, appropriate practice is a basic principle in the learning process. Emphasis is placed both on the necessity of practice and on the caution that the practice be *appropriate*.

The instructor may teach a fact or a basic concept; the learner may hear and understand, but this is not sufficient. The learner should be given opportunity to participate in an active learning experience.

Thus it was that Jesus “called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two.” His disciples had, no doubt, understood a number of principles of truth, but they still had much to learn. Jesus saw the necessity of their gaining experience while He was with them:

“Now, while He was personally with them, to point out their errors, and counsel and correct them, the Saviour sent them forth as His representatives.”

It seems clear that Jesus saw the disciples’ need of having their work evaluated soon after their “practice” of communicating the gospel message. Both the practical experience and the evaluation of their experiences were important to their development as laborers in His work.

In the same way each Christian grows and learns. And as he does, there should be a “settling into the truth.” But there is danger, on the other hand, that, through incorrect practice, there may likewise be a “settling into error.”

Appropriate practice is a principle telling the teacher of truth to step out of the central spotlight and to allow the responding hearer to have an opportunity to practice what he learns. It is a principle that also suggests that the teacher (of whatever profession) be ready to evaluate the progress of the learner *while the learner is still learning*, so as to ensure that the practices or habits are correct and to guard against wrong practices.

Evaluating *while the learner is still learning*, we do well to observe carefully the Master’s methods. “While He was personally with them, to point out their errors, and counsel and correct them, the Saviour sent them forth.” Jesus (1) pointed out their errors, (2) counseled them, and (3) corrected them. This method constituted an *evaluation of the learner’s progress*. And it was obviously done for the purpose of helping the learner grow. If we evaluate a student only at the end of a semester, then our evaluation may be more of an obituary than an evaluation.

Constructive evaluation combines kindness and courage. Fearing to hurt, we often withhold

making honest, objective evaluations. Actually, this failure to evaluate hurts the person more than does the “correction” he might have received. Could it be that we have let people continue in error because we did not want to experience the discomfort of the evaluative task?

The beauty of our Lord may be seen not only in His perfect life but in His manner of meeting the needs of man. Viewing the principle of appropriate practice, we see again that He provides the perfect Model: (1) He gave His learners opportunity to practice, and (2) He evaluated their progress through encouragement and correction.

As He evaluated their activities, and as they discussed with Him their victories and defeats, they gained new insights into their mission. They needed counsel, correction, and kindness; this they received from Jesus, for that was His manner.

Goals and Objectives

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me (Mark 10:21).

Every teacher should see to it that his work tends to definite results. Before attempting to teach a subject, he should have a distinct plan in mind, and should know just what he desires to accomplish. He should not rest satisfied with the presentation of any subject until the student understands the principle involved, perceives its truth, and is able to state clearly what he has learned.—*Education*, pp. 233, 234.

The youth should be encouraged to advance just as far as their capabilities will permit. But before taking up the higher branches of study, let them master the lower. This is too often neglected.—*Ibid.*, p. 234.

When a family plans a vacation trip, much care should be taken to ensure a safe trip, time for relaxation and recreation, activities for each one, and finances enough. Small children do not always share in the planning; but as they grow older, they should be taken into the planning circle.

At first glance, planning seems to be a mechanical activity that might take away the excitement and sense of discovery that a vacation trip seems to promise. A more careful view, however, reveals that planning does not spoil the fun; it prevents the trip from becoming a disaster.

Planning is essential to any line of work, whether professional, technical, or *so-called* unskilled. The builder has plans for his building.

He has a goal in mind, the completion of an excellent building. Along the way he has particular objectives and target dates. He has to schedule the various specialists, such as plumbers, bricklayers, concrete workmen, roofers, electricians, and dry-wall installers. The builder knows the importance of a precise schedule and works fervently to see that each specialist meets the appointed dates.

Perhaps no more explicit instruction for anyone communicating truth can be found than that given to the teacher. When the teacher has set a goal for himself and has prepared certain objectives to be kept in mind in reaching that goal, he is instructed to share this information with the learner:

"Every teacher should see to it that his work tends to definite results. Before attempting to teach a subject, he should have a distinct plan in mind, and should know just what he desires to accomplish. He should not rest satisfied with the presentation of any subject until the student understands the principle involved, perceives its truth, and is able to state clearly what he has learned."

One of the principal reasons for making the goal and the objectives clear to the learner is that the learner may perceive the truth of what is taught.

Leading educators today are in full accord with this method. Curriculum planners and teachers are expected to set up the general goals of learning and to identify specific performance or behavioral objectives that measure the progress of the learner as he moves toward that particular goal.

Sound arguments support this approach to learning. When it is made clear what the learner is to learn, then it becomes clear to the teacher what he is to teach. Measurement of student progress—evaluation—is based upon the established objectives. There are no secrets kept from the learner; he knows what his task is. The teacher helps him progress along the journey of his task, and bases his evaluation upon the specific task assigned.

When the learning task is made this clear, and when the expected learning outcomes are thus measurable or observable, the door is opened to the next logical step in education: "The youth should be encouraged to advance just as far as their capabilities will permit. But before taking up the higher branches of study, let them master the lower. This is too often neglected."

It is at this point that educators, and perhaps gospel workers in other branches of the church, are somewhat guilty. Learners are allowed to skim over certain basic principles without understanding them fully. The counsel is clear:

"Let them master the lower. This is too often neglected." When we adopt these procedures, we are doing a work that meets the requirement called "accountability."

Clearly outlined plans and objectives make it possible for the learner to progress at his own rate without fear of confusion.

Some may feel that the planning of goals and objectives involves too much of a mechanical procedure. It appears to them to set aside the miraculous workings of the Holy Spirit. The truth is, however, that the establishment of goals and objectives does not goose-step the people involved into a dull, mechanical life style.

Early in the experience of many educators, the introduction of "behavioral objectives" brought with it a practice that appeared to be little more than the training of animals. That was true, to a degree, because the early practice of setting objectives was not well understood. Educators found it easiest to write objectives that merely elicited factual results. For example, it was easy to write, "The student will be able to list the sixty-six books of the Bible in order." Or, "The student will memorize the Sabbath commandment." Or, "The student will be able to give the names of the twelve apostles."

However, when educators began to realize that objectives could elicit higher levels of thought and even more practical levels of applied learning, then it became evident that the objective was one of the finest tools in the hands of educators.

Objectives may identify learning outcomes at all levels of human experience. For instance, an objective may reveal, not only the learner's ability to memorize or state facts but his ability to understand, to make application, to analyze and discover significant data, to assemble parts into a significant whole, and even to make judgments based upon sound evaluative procedures.

There are at least two other reasons why teachers should give careful attention to the value of establishing goals and objectives. One of these is found in the experience of the learners themselves. When goals and objectives are made clear to the learner, and when he sees the direction in which the objectives are leading, he soon learns to bear his share of the responsibility in the learning experience. This principle is basic to all effective learning.

A second value of great importance to be found in the establishment of goals and objectives is that the practice confronts the learner with personal decision-making opportunities all along the learning journey.

Many have heard of and experienced the quiet, almost-imperceptible work of the Spirit of God upon the heart. This can be experienced by

the learner who journeys step by step toward the learning goal. As the learner studies each principle, he is confronted with the decision.

Almost overlooked are the numerous incidents in which the Scriptures present clear, challenging objectives. Note the clarity of the following:

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

Again: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:19).

Educators today know that the key in writing objectives is found in the verb of the stated objective. This verb should call for a definitive action that can be measured or observed. With that in mind, note the counsel Jesus gave to a young man whom He loved:

"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

Jesus leaves no doubt as to the course His hearer should take. In this one verse alone He expresses His will for this young man by employing six verbs that clearly outline the plan of action the young man was to follow.

Modern educators endorse the clarity of Jesus' method without recognizing that it is His.

Should we have objections to objectives? Should objectives be overruled? Let us hope not.

Individual Differentiation

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; . . . Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me (John 21:20-22).

And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability (Matt. 25:15).

Two people may be suffering from identical diseases. These people may be given identical prescriptions; however, where individual differences exist, the prescriptions might be varied to meet the needs of each individual. Differences in size, age, life style, and sex may be among the factors that lead the doctor to prescribe medication according to the individual needs of the patient.

Similarly with learners; to treat them all alike may be very inconsistent. Learners have different backgrounds, different skills, different temperaments, and should be dealt with ac-

cording to their needs, interests, and abilities.

Those who have been in military service can recall how the morale dipped low when GI's were treated en masse rather than as individuals. The loss of the "sense of person," or the loss of individuality, made the GI feel less than human. His humor and wisecracking, and his seemingly carefree spirit, often veiled his crowded loneliness.

Unfortunately, it is the professional teacher who has often been the most vocal in resisting the principle of individual differentiation—"Treat them all alike; prove that you are fair and square." Possibly this stance is the greatest error among educators!

Jesus demonstrated His concern for each individual by treating each one differently. This sometimes brought dismay to His disciples and certainly brought severe criticism from His enemies. In fact, as we reflect upon our reactions to His treatment of people, we also have wondered at His seeming "inconsistency." We have difficulty in attempting to justify Jesus' actions as they varied from person to person. Even His parables have seemed unfair. For example, the parable of the talents can bother many of us: "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." Why should God do this? Why should one person have more talents than another? Is it fair?

We must forever abandon the careless dictum that we "treat everybody exactly alike." First of all, this isn't possible. Second, it may be a very unfair practice, for it should be evident to us that people should be treated differently.

Some of the greatest injustices ever imposed upon man have been in those instances in which everyone is treated alike, or in which everyone is given the same amount of time to accomplish a certain task. This inequity is illustrated many times over in education. For example, students have been given nine months in which to master the first year of algebra. Generally within an algebra class one finds a wide range in student abilities. But in the lockstep sameness of educational procedures of the past, bright students and slow students alike have been expected to meet the requirements of algebra in the same amount of time. Those students who have not done so have been given grades depicting their failures. Had these students been given more time, with appropriate learning opportunities, they also might have reached a fully satisfactory degree of proficiency.

On the other end of the continuum, the very bright and quick student may have been required to sit in the class for nine months.

From the above illustration, we can see where

two people "treated exactly alike" are given two contrasting experiences. The one suffers frustration of failure because he has not been given the opportunity to complete his work. The other experiences frustration from being held back from advancing and from working up to his abilities.

The need for individual differentiation can clearly be seen in the physical world. Persons approaching the golden age of the senior citizen must have standards of physical activity with which they can cope. More and more young men today have developed the ability to run the mile in four minutes. But to expect the youth of yesteryear to accomplish this feat is to expect the impossible.

Intellectually, we may be a little less certain about what people can do or cannot do. Nevertheless, we do see variations here also. And here, even as in the physical feat of running the four-minute mile, we must not expect people to do the impossible. If one has the capability of reaching a certain standard, another should not be labeled a failure because he cannot reach that same standard.

What should be expected, however, is that each put forth every effort to reach the reasonable standard before him. When one is faithful in this area he finds that God enables him to reach heights he had never dreamed of reaching. The promise is given, "Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is a goal to be reached."—*Education*, p. 18.

Jesus had different plans for two very different men—John and Peter. Peter was not to worry about John's assignment; the Lord had plans for Peter, and Peter was to concentrate on his task. "How about John?" was an inappropriate question.

Aids and Aides

When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? . . . Andrew . . . saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. . . . And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost (John 6:5-12).

In most of His activities Jesus utilized the help of others. The former demoniac was to go throughout his country to lay the groundwork for the ministry Jesus would eventually perform in that area; the man at the pool of Bethesda was instructed to take up his bed and walk;

Peter was instructed to catch a fish and from the fish's mouth to get the coin to pay the Temple tax for himself and Jesus; the servants at Cana were to gather the jars and to put water in them before Jesus performed the miracle of changing the water to wine. Jesus introduced His followers to the partnership of service.

One of the finest examples of Jesus' use of aides is seen in the miracle He performed in feeding the 5,000. The account in John 6:5-12 identified several persons employed as aides in this miracle. First, the boy with the loaves and fishes participated in this miraculous accomplishment. Philip and others were invited to examine the problem to see how the members of the crowd might have their hunger satisfied. The disciples became involved in organizing the multitude into groups, in distributing the food, and in gathering up the remaining food after the multitude had been satisfied. It was important to Jesus that activities be carried out in an organized manner. It was equally important to Him that His disciples be given opportunity to work with Him as aides.

The vibrant church has an efficient organization: pastor, youth pastor, elders, deacons, deaconesses, Sabbath school teachers, clerk, et cetera. All have their role in the church program. In addition to these officers, the rest of the church members are given opportunities to serve in church programs, school programs, and in the efforts of the public evangelist.

Until recent years, school systems and educational leaders have not made effective use of aides in learning. Now educators have their own jargon in this area. The good administrator recognizes the need for an "efficient utilization of his staff." This quoted expression will not tug at the hearts of any readers, but the proper utilization of staff is an important function in education today.

In the more efficient educational systems today, in addition to the classroom teaching, numerous roles have been created to provide for better learning. We find not only administrators but administrators with special functions. Guidance and counseling personnel make up a part of the educational staff. Career-education coordinators are found in increasing numbers. Teacher aides of various varieties are employed. Instructional assistants are those who have some preparation in professional teaching and who aid most directly in the actual teaching-learning setting.

Numerous other aides have become a part of many school systems; some aides merely assist in the recording of grades and the filing and the passing out of papers, et cetera. Some aides serve on a volunteer basis; this is the case with

many of the parents in the community. Other teacher aides are supplied through student-teacher programs, these frequently receiving elective credit for their work. Some programs come under the heading of work experience.

There are numerous points to be made in education as they relate to the use of aides in the educational program. These points have values that carry over into other endeavors of the church. The efficient utilization of staff, to which the proper use of aides is directly associated, can provide many advantages. First, it can allow the professional teacher to concentrate most of his time on the task of teaching. Second, it can provide the student with better learning opportunities in that the teacher has more time to concentrate on the student's individual needs. At the same time it places an appropriate amount of responsibility on the student as the learner. Third, an efficient use of staff, in which teachers with professional salaries are not given tasks that can be handled by less costly personnel, can be more economical in terms of money and in terms of the appropriate use of time. Finally, an efficient organization of the staff will provide more opportunity for preparation. Thus better educational procedures may be adopted, and the quality of learning will be improved.

As we follow the footsteps of Jesus through the Bible, we do not ordinarily think of the entourage who followed Him as a highly organized group of individuals. We must realize first of all that His followers were primarily learners who occasionally were sent out on specific tasks—tasks that prepared them for their future full-time gospel work. However, as casual and as informal as Jesus and His followers appeared to be, the group nevertheless constituted a simple but efficient organization. One individual was the treasurer of the few funds they possessed. When the disciples were sent out, they were sent out two by two. Instructions were always carefully given and were to be followed in detail. The feeding of the 5,000, mentioned earlier, reveals a most efficient plan of organization. Even the Last Supper in the upper room involved carefully followed instructions.

Jesus' itinerary during His three and a half years of ministry may appear to some as an unplanned wandering from place to place. Not so; Jesus went into certain areas to accomplish particular tasks. It was not an accident that the Syrophenician woman should have encountered Jesus. The incident with the demoniacs was not merely a rude interruption of Jesus' day. The delay of Jesus in coming to the aid of Mary and Martha, at the time of the death of Lazarus, was not without design.

We would not propose that Jesus was a mechanical organizer, or that He was programmed to follow through certain stages of His life. We do suggest, however, that His redemptive work followed a careful, loving plan. His plans for each day were so naturally tied to His great mission and to the needs of unredeemed man that one rarely thinks of His "schedule" or of His "series of appointments." This beautiful demonstration of work conducted in an unfrenzied manner, in which He provided salvation for all of mankind, is reason enough for our desiring to work in the manner of Jesus.

Interaction

Almost at once a woman whose young daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit heard of him, came in, and fell at his feet. (She was a Gentile, a Phoenician of Syria by nationality.) She begged him to drive the spirit out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be satisfied first; it is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." "Sir," she answered, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's scraps." He said to her, "For saying that, you may go home content; the unclean spirit has gone out of your daughter." And when she returned home, she found the child lying in bed; the spirit had left her (Mark 7:25-30, N.E.B.).

It was Christ Himself who put into that mother's heart the persistence which would not be repulsed.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 175.

The Bible gives considerable evidence that God not only permits but appears to encourage individuals to question His procedures and His actions.

The book of Job reveals vigorous debates and considerable interaction between Job and his three "friends." It reveals also that Job asked certain incisive questions of God. Finally the Lord asks a series of overwhelming questions for which Job has no answer. Job wisely and humbly submits, and decides to put his hand over his mouth, for he has talked too much.

We can read how Habakkuk questioned God and how God, in turn, answered. Jeremiah cried out his concerns to his Lord; the psalmist alternately reveals his joys and his heartaches and how the Lord has responded to his needs. Peter and the other disciples prodded their Lord with questions and even went so far as to rebuke their Lord for talking about His suffering and death.

A classic example of one who refused to accept the rationale that Jesus set forth was a certain Syrophenician woman. This woman pursued Jesus to the extent that she irritated the disciples, and Jesus seemingly entered into the spirit of the disciples. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 400.) When the woman begged Jesus to drive the evil spirit out of her daughter, Jesus responded, "Let the children be satisfied first; it is

not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Even this rebuke did not deter the woman from her objective. She responded, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's scraps."

For our purpose here, we would dwell upon a method of teaching Jesus employed; He established opportunities for His hearers to interact with one another and with Him. Not only did Jesus permit interaction; He apparently encouraged it, seeing in it opportunity for His hearers to gain a valuable learning experience. It is especially refreshing to note in this incident with the Syrophenician woman that "it was Christ Himself who put into that mother's heart the persistence which would not be repulsed."

One of the weaknesses of studying by correspondence is that it provides for little or no active interaction between instructor and learner. (This does not discount the value of correspondence courses, however, for these courses have a definite place in the work of the church.)

Educators have found, however, that a number of the individualized approaches to instruction and learning have the same weaknesses as do correspondence courses. These early approaches to individualized instruction isolated the learner in a learning carrel or with a textbook and workbook; they overlooked the importance of the interaction experiences between students and students and teacher.

The teacher who must be the center of attention in the teaching-learning experience will not find time or allow time for interaction activities.

The easily "threatened" teacher may find

such experiences very upsetting. Such teachers find it easy to classify persistent youth as rebels. "If they really love the Lord, they won't be continuously questioning." These teachers have forgotten that Jesus desired to satisfy the inquisitive mind. They may have forgotten also that "Jesus desired to awaken inquiry."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 20.

Some educators have made wrong uses of interactions. It is difficult to ascertain why, but they often create an atmosphere of doubt in the interaction experience. To set forth thought-provoking questions that lead in the direction of a solution to a problem is one thing; but quite another thing is to propose a series of questions that tend to impugn the character of God, the veracity of His Word, and the work of His messengers. This latter we must avoid.

As we study further the role of the question in the interaction experience, two extremes show up that the instructor needs to avoid. One is at the conservative end of the continuum; it is the practice of answering all or most all of the questions for the learner. In this experience the instructor appears overanxious in his desire that the learner be thoroughly indoctrinated with the truth. Just as the chick must peck its way out of the shell, the learner must also be given opportunity to struggle with basic problems. This is a part of the thinking process that Inspiration declares to be of great importance.

The other extreme in the art of questioning is found in the practice of the teacher who will allow questions to go unresolved for long periods of time.

The true interaction experience is one in

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which the student has opportunity to ask his share of questions. The teacher appreciates the questions, for he can, through the questions, identify the student's interests and needs. The instructor is not disturbed by questions he cannot answer; but he and the students seek out the answers together. When the quest is an honest search, the learner and the instructor soon see eye to eye and heart to heart, and this is a redemptive experience.

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Part II of this article will appear in the February-March, 1979, issue of the JOURNAL.

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