

need that one teach you again." When David caught a glimpse of the great sword of Goliath at Nob, he exclaimed to Ahimelech the priest, "Give it me! There is none like that." Why? He had already tested it. He had proved its metal. "The Word of God is quick and sharper than any two edged sword." The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. This is the teacher's weapon—a weapon not carnal, but nevertheless mighty. *There is none like that.* In the heart of every child committed to you, the strongholds of Satan are reared. In order to pull them down, and drive him out, this sword must be used. You must cry "Give it me."—"*Rax me the Bible*" To wield it successfully you must know its temper. It must not be allowed to contract rust—to hang up uselessly in the scabbard, that the enamelled hilt, and elegant carving of the outward case may be admired. It must be taken down and unsheathed. It must cut to the dividing sunder of your own soul and spirit, dwelling in you richly in all knowledge and spiritual understanding.

That you fill a seat, or take a degree in some College, is not expected. To describe the circle of the sciences, be brought up at the feet of some Gamaliel in the departments of Classics or Philosophy, or, in the world's acceptance, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, is not desired of you. But to graduate in the school of Christ—to be found sitting at the feet of Jesus—to master the excellency of His knowledge—to be diligent and devout Bible students;—this is what the Lord requireth.—An intelligent acquaintance with the *material* on which you have to work—the *subjects* with whom you have to deal is also necessary. They are *sinful*. When after the flood God gazed from heaven, it grieved him to discover that the imagination of man's heart, was evil from his youth. Nor were there any redeeming features. It was, "only evil and that continually." We hear much of the guileless innocence of childhood. This may suit very well the sentiment of poetry and the dreams of romance, or the claptrap orators of men in high places, who may be clever statesmen, but are miserably flippant and shallow Theologians. Turn over the pages in the books either of God or of experience, you will learn a far different story.

We go astray from the very womb speaking lies. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. Yes—bound up. How emphatic the expression—bound up within the volume of that most mysterious book—the *heart of a child*; blotting every leaf, rendering it, not as it was in the beginning, a living epistle of God, but a record of the doctrines and deeds of our father the devil.

This is your field of operation. Very unpromising truly;—that which beareth briars and thorns, nigh into cursing"—and if God's husbandry be not superadded, "whose end is to be burned." This field you must scan, that you may know how best to direct the Gospel plough and scatter the incorruptible seed. The farmer should know the soil he has to work upon, before he proceeds to employ the implements, and to go through the processes of husbandry. The physician should know the patients who solicit his advice, the nature of their constitution, and the disease with which they are affected, ere venturing to apply the remedy. In like manner and for similar reasons, the teacher should endeavour to acquire an intimate knowledge of the prevalent features and faults in every child committed to his care.

Nor can the teacher be a man of God, thoroughly furnished, unless he keep steadily beneath his eye the grand object of his teaching. It is to work a mighty change on the head—the heart, and the habits of every child—to enlighten and inform the first—to revo-

lutionize and quicken the second—to reform and re-mould the last.

The possession then of a competent measure of intelligence respecting the weapons to be wielded, and the work to be done, in the subjects it contemplates, and the objects it involves, cannot be thought lightly of in the catalogue of a teacher's qualifications.

### III. Aptitude.

A man may be a dunce of learning. But the ponderous gate is barred. The learning is bound; secreted in the cells within, altogether beyond the reach of the crowd bustling along the streets without. He knows much and well, but cannot make it available. He is a mine, containing much precious ore, but it is far down below the surface. He is not a mint sending forth current coin, bearing the stamp of his individual mind, and ready for use.—There may be much water, sparkling, refreshing, but the well is deep—ordinary mortals cannot fathom it—they have nothing to draw with. It is of the utmost importance to a teacher that he be not merely intelligent, possessing extensive knowledge, but that he be capable of applying his knowledge to good purpose,—of laying out his talents at usury.—"*Apt to teach*" finds a prominent place in Paul's catalogue of qualifications for a minister. It is equally necessary for a Sabbath School Teacher. Acquirements the most extensive prove practically worthless from want of this aptitude. From having it we often find persons of the most limited mental resources carrying it over those the best informed and the most deeply read. Here you see the little group all eye and all ear, hanging with breathless interest on the lips of the teacher, and drinking in with avidity the sincere milk of the Word. There from the restiveness of the body, the listlessness of the look, you perceive the entire absence of interest. There are some most worthy and well meaning teachers, who fail in their work, in consequence of their not conveying what they mean in terms sufficiently simple and distinct. They are cloudy and circuitous in their mode of expressing themselves. They use words not purely Saxon, which children can best take up, but long ones imported from foreign vocabularies.—There is a vagueness about their ideas—they are seen looming through a mist—or it is truth seen through a prism, broken up into fragments, and catching a colouring from the medium through which it has passed. The rays are not diffused in their native vividness, and entireness, as they dart from the Sun of Righteousness. Or, it may be, dry doctrinal discussions are indulged in. Long-winded exhortations are given, and questions are proposed either so difficult, as to be beyond the comprehension of the children, or so easy as to contain the answer within themselves. The children become fidgetty. In their very attitude you can read the complaint, "Oh what a weariness is it—when will it be over." They begin gradually to drop off. The teacher blames them for their irregularity of attendance, and the air of indifference they put on when they come, little surmising perhaps, all the while, that he is himself the cause, that it all proceeds from a destitution on his part of this important qualification "apt to teach."

### IV. Discrimination.

There are amongst children diversities of gifts. In passing along the street you are struck with the fact that every face differs. It is with character as with countenance. There is every variety of feature. And what is a Sabbath School but an epitome of human nature?—The child is the father of the man. In the children assembled in these humble institutions, you see humanity in its varied forms and phases. One is dull—slow to understand. You must therefore use great plainness of

speech, giving line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. The sincere milk of the word must be instilled in drops, according as he is able to bear it.

Another is forward, speaking before the time, determined on taking the word out of the mouth of all the rest, claiming a monopoly in answering. You must rein in without altogether removing the spur to exertion,—restrain without unduly discouraging.

A third is like Nabal, surly, savage, disobliging, unamiable. You must try to soften, you must smooth away the roughness, take off the thick crust, and aim at reaching the fountain of sensibility that may be lurking beneath.

This one is like Diotrophes, selfish in his notions, desiring to have the pre-eminence.—You must cause him not to look to his own things merely, and not to think of himself more highly than he ought. That one is like John, gentle, winning, or like Hannah, of a subdued and sensitive spirit; or like Mary, modest and retiring. You must suit your instructions accordingly—you must not break the bruised, need nor quench the smoking flax.—Where such diversities exist, how necessary it is that your senses be exercised to discern; that you possess a keen eye, a shrewd mind, the capacity to try the spirits. Thus will you rightly divide the word, and give to each a portion of meat in *due season*.

### V. Benevolence.

How does God deal with souls? Let the parable of the Prodigal Son answer. "Like as a father pitieth his children"—"as one whom his mother comforteth." Listen to the sounding of His bowels and of His mercies towards them: "Is Ephraim my dear son is he a pleasant child, for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still." The most powerful arguments, the most pathetic appeals He employs. He is unwilling to give up the most stubborn and rebellious.—"How shall I give thee up"—Not until every conceivable appliance is used in vain, is the sentence uttered "Let them alone."

Sabbath School Teachers must seek in this respect to be "followers of God as dear children."

How did the great Teacher act? He had "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way." The thought of souls doomed to destruction drew tears from His eyes. He wept over them. This solicitude made Him constantly a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The wings of His mercy were stretched out to invite the most worthless—"How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathered her chickens." His heart overflowed with tenderness. In what a winning way was this tenderness shewn to children! He gathered the lambs in His arms, when others officiously and offensively interfered to drive them away; He took them up and blessed them. We wonder not that the little children so readily leaped into those arms of love. We wonder not that when the Lord whom they then sought did suddenly come to His temple they made the courts ring with "Hosanna to the Son of David." Let the same mind (in this respect) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

How acted the great Apostle of the Gentiles? Cast in a mould of iron, no difficulties appalled Him. But when he dealt with priceless souls, his heart melted. "Many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you **EVEN WEARING**, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

Blended with his sterling integrity, sturdy independence, unflinching courage, and indomitable perseverance, how much was there of the meekness and gentleness of Christ! "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, so, being affectionately desi-