

The Qualifications of the Ideal Sabbath School Teacher.

I. *Personal Godliness.*

As the main object of Sabbath School teaching is conversion, the essential qualification of the teacher is personal godliness. Only those who know the love of Christ can sincerely speak of that love to others.

II. *A consistent walk and conversation.*

The main object of teaching both in the Public School and in the Sabbath School is not the communication of knowledge but the building up of character; and for this purpose, "example is better than precept." We teach not only by what we do and say, but to a far greater extent by what we are.

III. *He must know the subject he wishes to teach.*

Nos. I and II may, in general, be taken for granted. There are few Sabbath School Teachers who do not possess these qualifications. The importance of III is not always appreciated, and yet there is no other characteristic or qualification which is so fundamental and essential.

(1) We can never convey into another mind nearly all of what we feel or know of any subject. There is always a large percentage of waste and loss in the act of transmission.

(2) What we really know we feel a strong inclination to teach. It is a law of human nature that there is an instinctive impulse to tell in some way our thoughts and emotions as soon as they become vivid and intense enough. "While I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue."

(3) Truth must be clearly and fully understood before it can be vividly felt: and it must be vividly felt by the teacher before it can be vividly felt by the pupil.

(4) When the subject is fully and familiarly known it leaves the teacher the full command of his power for the purpose of teaching. A teacher possesses a certain amount of energy, and if part of this is employed in trying to think out the subject just so much the less will be available for teaching it.

(5) And lastly, the ample knowledge of the teaching inspires the pupil with that confidence which every pupil should have in his teacher.

IV. *What He must possess:—*

(1) An intimate acquaintance with the Word of God.

(2) A knowledge of the chronology of the Bible, and the geography, both physical and political, of Bible lands. "He must needs go through Samaria." Why?

(3) A knowledge of contemporary history. Give illustrations.

(4) An acquaintance with the manners and customs of Eastern lands. Give illustrations.

(5) A knowledge of the natural history of the Bible.

V. *He should always be a learner.*

As soon as a teacher ceases to be a systematic student, he ceases to be an effective teacher. Pupils should not be asked to drink from a stagnant pool but from a living fountain.

VI. *Patience and self-control are of prime importance.*

In order to control and influence others we must first be able to control ourselves.

VII. *He must know the nature of childhood and be able and ready to sympathize with childhood.*

A Sabbath-school teacher should know the nature of the faculties which he is to develop and train, and the order in which these faculties are developed. The wisest training will be directed to these powers that are conspicuously active at the time.

VIII. *He should possess an agreeable manner and a cheerful disposition.*

To many a pupil his teacher is the representative and embodiment of what a Christian ought to be, and if that teacher is of a fault-finding, sad, and whining disposition, the pupil will naturally think that Christianity is not that joyous and beautiful thing that it is represented to be.

IX. *Earnestness is a powerful factor.*

If we wish to impress others, one of the first requisites is to be ourselves impressed. That which we know and greatly care about we very soon learn to impart, but that which we know and do not care about we will soon cease to know at all. We must feel deeply what we wish others to feel.

X. *And lastly Hopefulness is by no means the least important of the characteristics of the Sabbath School Teacher.*

The Teacher should remember that he is doing God's work, and that God has never proved unfaithful, but has always owned and blessed every work done for him. The blessing may not always come when and in the manner we expect, but that it will come there is no doubt.