

The Sunday School Banner.

TORONTO, JULY, 1873.

THE TEACHER TRAINING.

It may be recollected that reference was made, in an early issue for this year, to the proposed system of the competitive examination of teachers. We then placed the subject before our readers "without note or comment," neither is it our purpose to enter into a discussion of the merits or demerits of the scheme at present.

Opinions largely differ concerning any action in this direction; and, while little positive opposition appears to have been offered, doubtfulness has frequently been expressed with regard to the practicability of any such a venture. Without discussing that, we have thought that the great principle involved in the whole is worthy of our considering, viz., the proper equipment and training of teachers for their work.

We yield to none in our admiration of the self-denying efforts of those men and women,—many of whom without much culture, but with warm hearts,—have been the means, under God, of exalting the Sunday-school to its present position in the church and the world. They were needed for the work they undertook, and were fitted for its accomplishment. It is, therefore, with no desire to depreciate the work of former days, that we say a higher order of teachers is needed for present requirements. This work of Sunday-school teaching is a serious business, and none may hope for success in it whose hearts have not been touched with the grand charity which is the Christian's heritage.

We are bold in making the assertion,

that we think the need of the teachers of to-day is two-fold in its character,—*first*, a clearer apprehension of the truth to be taught; *secondly*, a higher state of spiritual power.

We are not altogether insensible of the difficulties experienced—especially in the country—of getting any one to teach at all, and therefore we would be the last willingly to put any barrier in the way by requiring too much; and yet we have sometimes feared that the truth is not always forcefully or well conveyed by those who teach in our schools,—and for this reason, that there is a great deal of ignorance on topics which should be thoroughly understood. It is required of those who teach in our schools, where the common branches of an education are taught, that they should be teachers qualified for their work. And does it not appear strange that any should be allowed to teach the great truths of salvation, without some evidence of their ability to teach with clearness and correctness? We advocate no impossible standard, but still, the times demand that those who teach shall be able to supply a reason for their faith to others. A clearer apprehension of the truth taught, then, is required.

It is scarcely needful that much should be said on the necessity of more spiritual power. We don't think the lack of the average teacher consists so much in the absence of mere literary attainments, or in the lack of abundant machinery, as in the absence of more of the spirit of Christ. This spirit is largely possessed now, but not so largely as it should be.

But, it may be asked, how is this training to be brought about? We have only one suggestion to offer, and it is this,—the establishment of normal classes, wherever possible, in connection with every church. Let this be led by the pastor, or