

classes and teachers. Every school will furnish some specimens of what may be called the highest exemplification of the system; some classes always present, always punctual, always interested, always active; some teachers always there, always prepared, always attractive, always effectual; and therefore some fruits of the highest and most blessed character always growing. That this difference will be found in some degree among the children, I should not deny. But this can be only occasional and individual. There are teachers, too, who are found especially adapted to some particular classes of children. But the differences are just as great between the individual children of the same general class, as between the social classes themselves. And there are some teachers who are always instruments of blessing, and I might almost say a blessing to all. How dear and precious such servants of the Lord are to a pastor's heart, and to the welfare of the church, who can fairly tell? But why should not all be such? There may be, and doubtless there is difference of gifts. But are there any gifts calculated for usefulness in the Sunday-school that every teacher may not in a fair measure and degree acquire?—Are there any that ever Christian may not have and exercise in some appropriate relation with entire success? I think not. And therefore while I speak upon this subject, I must deal with it, not as involving only the characteristics of the poet, natural and not to be attained, but as the qualifications of the faithful practical servant, whose best services are the improvements of his constant opportunities, and whose brightest graces are the light of a lamp which, though grace has started with its divine spark, faithful watching and care keep in its abiding and useful glow.

Of all qualifications in a successful teacher real and experimental piety is by far the most important. A teacher in a Sunday-school actually and professedly unconverted, seems an anomaly simply absurd. I should hardly waste a moment in discussing such a point. "In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil." If there are but those two classes on earth, in a spiritual division, as I certainly cannot doubt, I can hardly imagine the propriety of employing one of either class to be a teacher in the ways of the other. There surely may be true piety in its germ in the heart, where as yet no open profession of it has been made in appointed ordinances of separation. And a wise consideration by the appointing power will take this possible fact into consideration in the present contingency. Perhaps the very desire to teach others the ways of Christ may be one of the first and most encouraging evidences of the reality of this spiritual life within, however feeble and doubtful it may appear. I would not, therefore, quench the smoking flax, or break the bruised reed; nor

on any account discourage one of the Lord's little ones in their desires to be useful. But it is a case which requires vast caution, and faithful and tender judgment. The interest to be confided is great. The possible evils may be greater. And all the circumstances which are individual and personal must be taken into account. But the governing principle must be laid down, that a teacher of others to be the children of God, should himself be his child;—a guardian and guide of the little children of the Saviour's household ought not to be a stranger and foreigner, having no hope, and without God in the world, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God. True piety is the growth and fruit of a converted heart,—an experience of the Saviour's forgiving love,—a real consecration of the soul, as bought with a price, to him who has redeemed and owns it. It is a state in which old things have passed away, and all things in their principles, and in their measure and degree of results, have become new. A Sunday-school teacher must be thus taught and born of God, so that the divine subjects of teaching shall not be the mere barren acquisitions of the hearing of the ear, but the real subjects of the experience and enjoyment of the heart. I am exceedingly earnest to press this point. It is the very starting-point in this new line of view. Everything else will depend upon it, and presuppose it. We cannot therefore, pass it with indifference or inattention. What is Sunday-school teaching but a ministry for God? In the very nature of the employment, it is a work for Christians, and for them alone. The idea is sometimes suggested, that getting some vain and irreligious persons to teach others, may be the means of leading them to learn themselves. This would seem too wicked to be merely absurd, if applied to the ministry of the Gospel. But though more manageable and more easily remedied, it is equally incongruous in the present case. We cannot afford to present our children as merely demonstrative subjects. Their interests and welfare are the things for which we seek. And in securing an agency for the blessing, the Lord must first call to his service, and then instruct and prepare for its adequate fulfillment. Our teachers must be in choice and heart and life the children and servants of the living God.

Added to this primary qualification, we may speak as second in importance, of enlarged Scriptural knowledge. Every part of the Sacred Word should be familiar to a teacher's mind. And to the utmost extent of individual means and time, the widest preparation should be made of attainment from this whole field. Here will come in the whole area of study in the localities and national customs which are connected with the historical teaching of the Bible. When we began our work, this field for study was vastly extensive, and widely scattered. But the lab-