

Doubtless it will be indispensable to be more select in the future than in the past, in the admission of candidates for the teacher's office. Persons incapable of maintaining their position must, however reluctantly, be held back from the work, at least for a season, until they shall have given evidence that they are susceptible of mental progress. The better educated classes, too, in various Christian circles, must be persuaded, if possible, of the duty of falling into the ranks of our Sunday-school teachers. Wherever they have done so gracefully, they have made an essential contribution to the energy and success of the cause. And in what department of service can they expect to be more honored or more useful? It is with them, if they are pious and devoted, to raise the tone of our Sunday school operations, to exert the most salutary and benevolent influence on those who have not enjoyed their opportunities, and to make the Sunday-school by God's blessing, what it ought to be, an advancing and palpably progressive institution.

But whatever advantages might accrue to the Sunday-school cause, from carrying into effect these suggestions, the writer of this article is persuaded that the spirit of indomitable improvement on the part of Sunday-school teachers themselves, is the main hope of our times, in reference to the great work in which they are engaged. The improving teacher—and all teachers must seek to belong to this class—will not place before him any ideal standard of qualification, but will ponder the spirit of the times; will look around him on the materials with which he has to deal, and will determine, by God's help, to make himself equal to the task which he has undertaken to perform. He will spare no pains to cultivate his mind, to enlarge the sphere of his knowledge, to remove the disqualifications of a defective education, to polish away surface vulgarities, and to put himself decidedly, and beyond all possible doubt or mistake, ahead of his class.

The improving teacher, even if he has enjoyed an average share of early training, will, every week, be adding to the list of his qualifications for the work to which he is devoted,—and if it has not been his lot to be thus educated in early years, he will, by the spirit of self-culture, in many instances raise himself to a level with those who have been more favorably circumstanced. The improving teacher, by the very tendency of mind which he cultivates, will be sensitive to his own defects, and will be satisfied with nothing short of their practical removal. Without anything of noise, or conceit, or boasting, he will steadily go forward in the path of improvement; and as he sees the benefit of his own culture in the progress of his pupils, he will be stimulated and encouraged to persevere, and will hope for

yet further advances in the path of useful and sanctified knowledge.

And above all, the improving teacher will watch over the spirit in which he performs his duty; and will only look for God's blessing on his Sunday labors as they are performed in accordance with the mind of Christ.

The improving teacher is unquestionably the great demand of the age, in reference to the Sunday-school cause!

### THE TEACHER'S LAMENT AND PRAYER.

*From Sunday-school Journal.*

The following is extracted from the diary of a very laborious and successful teacher of a former generation. Those who read it will see, that though men and times change, infirmities and temptations are common to all.

“15th Jan., 1790.—I have again attended to the duties of my school without the requisite preparation. Oh, my God, grant me grace to improve in this respect. I feel that I deceive myself when I expect to be made useful under these circumstances; when I fancy that I understand my subject, and am seduced to attend to some other business as of more immediate consequence; for it is impossible that any other occupation could be of such paramount importance. From this deficiency in preparatory study, many errors arise; the instruction becomes uninteresting, confused, prolix, and undefined; the children become perplexed; their attention is distracted, and the lesson is unpleasant both to them and myself. I feel that I am especially called upon to beware of degenerating into tedious minutiae and of becoming too diffuse, and at the same time too abrupt for their youthful minds. To comprehend and apply one truth is more advantageous to them than to advance ten propositions, none of which they have been able to understand or retain in their memories; or, perhaps, forget, in their attention to the nine, the one which was of the most importance. Oh, God, assist me to copy more closely the example which thy dear Son has left us of imparting instruction, and enable me to acquire the simplicity, conciseness, and impressive style of my dear Master. Let me, before I propound any doctrine to the children, first inquire, If it be necessary? If it be profitable? If some other would not be more appropriate? If it will be more suitable to their capacities? What will be the object attained by it? And whether it will give them only the appearance of learning without any useful result? And as I am able to answer these questions, let me adopt or cast aside my subject.”

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