

[151]

Chapter 6 — Guiding Principles in Administration Following the Objective

The object of the Sabbath School should not be lost sight of in mechanical arrangements, thus occupying time which should be given to other important matters. We should ever be guarded against forms and ceremonies which will eclipse the real object for which we are laboring. There is danger of carrying system to such an extreme that the Sabbath School will become weariness, when, on the contrary, it should be a rest, a refreshment, and a blessing.

The purity and simplicity of the Sabbath School must not be swallowed up in such an endless variety of forms that sufficient time cannot be devoted to religious interests. The beauty and success of the school are in its simplicity and earnestness in serving God. Nothing can be done without order and regulation, but these may be arranged so as to shut out greater and more important duties. Less should be said to the scholars about the external preliminaries and system, and much more should be said in regard to the salvation of their souls. This must be made the ruling principle of the school.

[152]

Danger of Cold Formality

The old, old story of the love of Jesus, repeated by the teachers and the superintendent, with the love of Jesus in the heart, will have a power that will convict and convert souls. If the love and tenderness of Jesus has touched your heart, you will be able to work for your scholars. The simplicity of the gospel must be kept in view. With help from above we can do faithful work for the Master. The fact should be kept continually before the scholars that without heart work all our efforts will be in vain.

Affection and love should be seen in every movement of the teachers and managers of the school. Cold formality should be replaced by earnest zeal and energy. The love of Jesus should

pervade the whole school that the pupils will learn to regard this as the highest education. Sternness or faultfinding should find no place in Sabbath School or day school. This should be put far from the hearts of the teachers, and of all who act a leading part in the school.

Pride should not be felt in the forms or mechanical workings of the school, but in the good that is accomplished in bringing souls to Jesus Christ. Machines may be made to respond to the will of man, working with perfect exactitude, but they are destitute of souls. So with schools where formality takes a leading place; it is as marble without life. When all connected with the school have a sense of the responsibility of their work, and feel that they are making efforts, not only

[153]

for time, but for eternity, order and harmony will be seen in every department. — TSS 89, 90.

The Evils of Formality

Evil does not result because of organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment. When form and machinery take the preeminence, and a laborious task is made of carrying on the work that should be done with simplicity, evil will result, and little will be accomplished in proportion to the effort put forth. The object of organization is just the reverse of this; and should we disorganize, it would be like tearing down that which we have built up. Evil results have been seen, both in the Sabbath School work and in the missionary society, because of making much of machinery while vital experience was lost sight of. In many of the imagined improvements that have been brought in, the mold of man has been placed upon the work. In the Sabbath School, men and women have been accepted as officers and teachers, who have not been spiritually minded, and had no live interest in the work committed to their care; but matters can be set in order only through the aid of the Holy Spirit. . . .

We might see a different order of things should a number

consecrate themselves wholly to God, and then devote their talents to the Sabbath School work, ever advancing in knowledge, and educating themselves so that they would be able to instruct others

[154]

as to the best methods to employ in the work; but it is not for the workers to seek for methods by which they can make a show, consuming time in theatrical performances and musical display, for this benefits no one. It does no good to train the children to make speeches for special occasions. They should be won to Christ, and instead of expending time, money, and effort to make a display, let the whole effort be made to gather sheaves for the harvest.

Many have seemed to think that all that was essential in Sabbath School work was to organize the school, and drill the scholars so that they would act in harmony with a set of ceremonies and forms; and that if persons could be secured as teachers, the Sabbath School would run itself. Teachers are often secured who cannot lead souls to Christ because they know not what it is to find Him precious to their own souls; but all those who do not value the soul so that they will work as Christ would have them, will scatter away from Christ. "He that [mark these words] gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad." If teachers have no burden to lead souls to Jesus, they will grow indifferent to the truth; they will become careless, and the atmosphere with which they surround their souls will work to scatter away from Christ. And with such elements in the Sabbath School, there will be a perpetual conflict with difficulties; for when the teachers engage in the work and have no interest in it, the pupils will partake of the same spirit. — FE 253, 254.

[155]

Need of Consecration in Sabbath School Workers

Those who engage in Sabbath School work should be persons who have consecrated themselves to God. They should be men and women of strong faith and warm sympathies, who are

fervent of spirit, and interested in all that pertains to the cause of Christ. They should give themselves to the work with unselfish endeavor, and at whatever sacrifice it may require, laying themselves on the altar, and pleading, with strong crying and tears, for the conversion of the youth who have been committed to their charge. Among those who would work for the Lord in the Sabbath School, let all selfish ambition be crucified, and "let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Let it be the Sabbath School worker's first ambition to educate the youth to do their duty in the fear of God and with simplicity.

The great want in the Sabbath School is not the want of machinery, but the want of knowledge in spiritual things. How greatly do the workers need a baptism of the Holy Spirit, that they may become true missionaries for God. They should learn to tax their minds to the utmost, that they may acquire a better knowledge of Bible truth. The teachers in the Sabbath School should pray daily for the enlightenment of heaven, that they may be able to open to the minds of the youth the treasures of the Sacred Word. Why not humble yourselves before the Lord, and let

[156]

the impression of the Holy Spirit be manifested upon your character and work? There is far too much self-complacency among those who engage in Sabbath School work, too much machinery and routine, and all this tends to lead the soul away from the Fountain of living water. — TSS 73, 74.

Training for Sabbath School Work

There is a dearth of educated ability among us, and we have not men who are sufficiently trained to do justice to the work of managing our Sabbath Schools and churches. Many who know the truth, still do not understand it in such a way that they could hold their own in its presentation. They are not prepared to present it in such a way that its sacred, majestic character will be clear to the people. Instead of less discipline, they need more thorough training. It is impossible for any one

to foresee to what he may be called. He may be placed in situations where he will need quick discernment and well-balanced arguments, and therefore it is for the honor of Christ that well-educated workers should be multiplied among us; they will be better able to communicate the truth in a clear, intelligent way, and the truth should be presented in a way that will be as free as possible from defects. — FE 256, 257.

Dependence on God

Our Sabbath Schools are not what the Lord would have them to be, for there is altogether too much

[157]

dependence placed upon form and machinery, while the life-giving power of God is not manifested for the conversion of souls, for whom Christ died. This order of things must be changed if our Sabbath Schools meet the purpose for which they exist. . . . When superintendents and teachers give themselves without reserve to God, they will not only resolve, but put their resolutions into effect. As soon as the workers in Sabbath and day schools enter upon their proper work, with a full realization of their dependence upon God, the grace of Christ will be supplied to unite with their human effort. It is important that every worker should understand that conviction and conversion of souls follow the cooperation of the human effort with the divine power.

A Soul-winning Ministry

Entire consecration of soul must be maintained as much by the teachers and superintendents of our Sabbath Schools as by the ministers in our pulpits, for all alike are engaged in the work of bringing souls to Christ. Each in his place is to work, as did Christ, in the spirit of love, for the erring and impenitent. This is what Christ would see in the Sabbath School work. . . . The angels of God that behold the face of the Father in heaven are looking upon the children and youth, whom you, as living agents for God, are teaching the way of salvation. Think of this, superintendents and teachers; you are in the presence of

heavenly angels, doing work the character of which

[158]

will testify to your fidelity or unfaithfulness to Christ. . . .

Aided by the Holy Spirit

The superintendents and teachers in our Sabbath Schools must be converted, rescued from their habitual insensibility. The precious lessons of truth must not be taught in a tame, lifeless way; but, by daily communion with the Lord, by a reception of the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, life-giving power must be added to their efforts to win souls to Christ. They must continually keep the mind stayed upon Christ, that the thoughts and impulses may be of a spiritual character, and that their manner and method of teaching may be subject to the dictation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in its highest manifestation to men is to enable them to put forth their best energies, as God is working in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

"Without Me," Christ says, "ye can do nothing." The worker is not to be left alone. The Spirit of God is given unto him that he may will and do of God's good pleasure, that he may make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. Then, teacher, follow the leadings of the Spirit. As the Spirit of God draws the hearts of the children and youth, you draw with tenderness and love, inviting them, and pleading with them to give their hearts to God.

The children and youth are Christ's purchased possession; He has bought them with an infinite price. Jesus loves the little ones. He looks with pity upon

[159]

the young, for He knows how Satan will seek to attract them into the broad way, making it look enticing to their eyes; and Jesus bids the angels to take special charge of these inexperienced souls, in their homes, in their school life, and in the Sabbath School. The Spirit is continually striving with

them, seeking to draw them to God; and the laborer together with God will feel his responsibility, and will earnestly work to win souls to Christ. — TSS 41-44.

Persevering Fidelity Needed

Such patient, prayerful, and persevering fidelity as was possessed by these saints of God [Caleb, Hannah, and Dorcas] is rare; yet the church cannot prosper without it. It is needed in the church, in the Sabbath School, and in society. — TSS 109.

Successful Cooperation

Our Sabbath School workers need to be especially imbued with the Spirit of Christ. They cannot be coworkers with Christ unless they have Him abiding in their hearts by faith. . . . The children need a more decided effort in regard to religious culture. The leading workers and the teachers should labor for perfect harmony. There should be cooperation on the part of parents, children, and teachers. Let every worker labor for wisdom and tact, that he may put forth that well-directed effort which God requires. We are to cultivate tact and sharp discernment, to be quick to see opportunities to do good, and to seize

[160]

these opportunities and make the most of them. — TSS 20.

The Holy Spirit Essential to Success

The officers and teachers in the Sabbath School need the guidance and instruction of the Holy Spirit, that they may be true educators, able to inspire thought, and to bring to remembrance the things that they have taught their pupils. It is the office of the Holy spirit to bring to mind in clear, distinct lines the words and works of Christ, that those who teach concerning the Redeemer of the world, may have power to lift up Christ before the minds of their classes. In all the arrangements of the Sabbath School there is need of the help of the Holy Spirit, in order that men and women may be

chosen to fill the responsible positions of superintendents, officers, and teachers, who are men and women of God.

It is not best to always keep the school under the management of one man; for he will give the school the mold of his own mind and ideas; but there should be workers in the school who will be able to impart fresh thoughts, and advance the school in spiritual life. The school may be attached to one who has served long and faithfully, but the good of the school must be considered, rather than the personal preferences of teachers or pupils. When it is evident that the school would be benefited by a change, by the accession of workers who know what it is to have a burden for souls, then let nothing stand in the way

[161]

of the change. Those who have no ambition to lift up self, though they may be deposed from office by this arrangement, will eagerly lay hold of every help by which the Sabbath School scholars may be elevated and advanced. Those who are old and experienced in the work have grasped that which would help on the cause of God, and younger men, who are not fully adapted for the work, should follow the example of the older brethren who have proved faithful in what has been committed to their hands, and thus educate themselves in wisdom and tact, that they may secure the success that is essential to good work. . . .

Important Questions

What is the reason that there are many found in our churches who are not settled, rooted, and grounded in the truth? Why are there found in the church those who walk in darkness and have no light, whose testimonies are halfhearted, cold, and full of complaint? Why are there those whose feet seem ready to stray into by and forbidden paths, who always have a pitiful tale to tell of temptation and defeat? Have the members of the church felt their responsibility? Have the elders and deacons of the church looked after the weak and straying ones? And have they realized that the wavering are in danger of losing their souls? Have you tried both by precept and example to plant the feet of the straying on the eternal Rock? Have Sabbath

School teachers and officers realized that they have a work to do in leading

[162]

the feet of the young into safe paths, and that they should count every selfish interest as nothing, that they may be winners of souls for the Master? There is a decided need of reformation in every branch of the work.

A Life-giving Power

Wonderful opportunities are passing by unimproved in our Sabbath School work. Let men and women of varied gifts come into the work, and in the fear of God do their best to save our youth. Let not those who have a mechanical way of doing things, take complete charge of the school, and mold it into formal ways, into precise habits, and yet all its life stifled in a multiplicity of regulations. It is essential to have order, but we need a great deal more spiritual knowledge along with our rules and regulations. We need a life-giving power, a zealous enthusiasm, a true animation, that our schools may become filled with an atmosphere of true piety and purity; that there may be real religious advancement; that the fear of the Lord may circulate through the school; that the superintendent and leaders may not be satisfied with a dead, formal process, but may set every agency at work, that the school may become the noblest, most efficient school in the world. This should be the object and ambition of every worker in the school.

Wanted — True Superintendents

The leaders in our schools should be men and women of quick intuitions, who have the Spirit of

[163]

God to aid them in reading character, who have managing ability, who can understand different phases of character, and display tact and wisdom in dealing with varied minds. There are many who can fill the place of superintendent in name, but what is needed is men who can fill the place in every sense of

the word. There are many who can go through the form cleverly enough; but they fail to impart courage and hope, to inspire thought, to quicken energy, and to impart such life that the school shall become a living, growing power for good.

There is a great field open to the teachers also, and they should seek to understand how to work in such a way as to lead out and develop the minds and hearts of the children. They should have the wisdom that cometh from above, that they may deal successfully with the youth and children. Many teachers are shortsighted, and take a course with the youth that does not tend to good results; and instead of advancement there is retrogression. What both workers and pupils need is the endowment of the Holy Spirit, that there may not be spasmodic reforms, but a steady growth in grace, a constant accession of spiritual life and power. — TSS 91-94.

Crippled for True Leadership

Our Sabbath Schools which are to instruct the children and youth are too superficial. The managers of these need to plow deeper. They need to put more thought and more hard work upon the

[164]

work they are doing. They need to be more thorough students of the Bible, and to have a deeper religious experience, in order to know how to conduct Sabbath Schools after the Lord's order, and how to lead children and youth to their Saviour. This is one of the branches of the work that is crippling along for the want of efficient, discerning men and women, who feel their accountability to God to use their powers, not to exhibit self, not for vainglory, but to do good. — TSS 111.

Mechanical, but Spiritless

We must come up to a higher plane of action. Let the Spirit of Jesus vitalize the souls of the workers. Then their plans and methods of labor will be of that character to win souls to Jesus Christ. In our large churches, where there are many children and youth, there is great danger of so managing the Sabbath

School that it will become a mere form, mechanical but spiritless. It lacks Jesus. — TSS 14.

The Choosing of Officers

Christian women may exert an influence for good over the youth and children. Their capabilities are God's entrusted talents, and should be wholly consecrated to the Master's service. Many are quick to discern, and efficient to execute, but they need to be closely connected with God. They will seek for new methods and ways by which to develop character and educate the youth how to use the talents God has given them.

[165]

In selecting officers from time to time, be sure that personal preferences do not rule, but place in positions of trust those whom you are convinced love and fear God, and who will make God their counselor. Without the love and fear of God, however brilliant the intellect may be, there will be failure. Jesus says, "Without Me ye can do nothing." This matter of choosing officers should not be left to the control of the Sabbath School scholars. To change the officers frequently will be an advantage to the school; for one man's mind is not to mold all other minds. He may have some excellent qualifications, and yet in some things be deficient. Another chosen may be efficient where the other was lacking. Different minds and qualities will bring in fresh ideas, fresh lines of thought; and this is essential. But, above everything else, select those who, in the simplicity of their souls, are walking in the truth, who love and fear God, and take their lessons in His school. Such will carry the scholars forward and upward. Under wise teachers the scholars will gain increased interest for the word of God, and have deeper insight into the Scriptures. Let Christ be the theme of every lesson. The lessons which Christ has given to His disciples are of the highest importance. — TSS 83, 84.

Counsel to Superintendents

There is earnest work to be done in our Sabbath Schools, and those who have the management of these schools should seek

to move with wisdom and

[166]

tact. It is a nice and important work to deal with minds, to leave a right impression, to give the right mold to character. It is a wise educator who seeks to call out the ability and powers of the student, instead of constantly endeavoring to impart instruction.

At different times I have received letters of inquiry in regard to the duties of the Sabbath School superintendent. One who felt grieved because he could not awaken a deeper interest on the part of teachers and scholars, said that he took much time in talking with them, explaining everything he thought essential for them to understand, and yet there seemed to be a great lack of interest. They were not moved religiously. I would here say to this honest brother, and to any others who may be laboring under similar difficulties. Examine to see if you are not responsible in a great degree, for this lack of religious interest.

Wearisome Remarks

Many try to do too much, and fail to encourage their teachers and students to do what they can. They need great simplicity and religious earnestness. They make long, dry speeches in the Sabbath School and the teachers' meeting, thus wearying the minds of both teachers and students. Such remarks are greatly out of place. They do not adapt their instruction to the real wants of the school, and they fail to draw hearts to them, for their own hearts are not full of spiritual sympathy. They do not realize that

[167]

by their long, tedious talks they are killing the interest in, and love for, the school. . . .

When the hearts of the workers are brought into sympathy with Christ, when he abides in them by living faith, they will not talk one half as long, nor manifest one half the smartness, that some do now; but what they say in love and simplicity will

reach the heart, and they will be brought in close sympathy with teachers, scholars, and church members.

Power in Simplicity

A true educator will carry the minds of his hearers with him. His words will be few but earnest. Coming from the heart, they will be full of sympathy, and warm with the love for precious souls. His educational advantages may have been limited, and he may have but little natural ability, but a love for the work and a willingness to labor in humility will enable him to awaken a deep interest in both teachers and scholars. The hearts of the young will be drawn to him. His work will not be a mere form. He may have the ability to draw out from both teachers and students precious gems of spiritual and intellectual truths, and thus, while educating others, he will be educated himself. The scholars are not awed by his display of profound knowledge, and in simple language they tell what impression the lesson has made upon their minds. The result is a deep and living interest in the school. Through the simplicity of the gospel of Christ, he has reached them where they are.

[168]

Their hearts are melted, and now he can mold them into the image of his Master.

A keen, sharp intellect may be an advantage, but the power of the educator is in his heart connection with the Light and Life of the world. He will love humanity and ever seek to bring it to a higher level. He will not always be blaming others, but his heart will be filled with pity. He will not be great in his own estimation, neither will he seek constantly to bolster up and strengthen his own dignity; but the humility of Jesus will be personified in his life. He will feel the truth of the words of Christ, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Such teachers as these are greatly needed. God will work with them. "Learn of Me," says Christ, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." Many who are engaged in the Sabbath School work need divine enlightenment. They lack spiritual insight to enable them to apprehend the wants of those for whom they are laboring. . . .

Criticism and Sharpness to Be Avoided

Superintendents, never scold nor complain before your teachers or scholars. If you wish to influence the school for good, put away the whip, and exert a heaven-inspiring influence, which will carry the minds of all with you. In making plans and regulations for the school, let them represent, as nearly as possible, the voice of the school. In some schools there is a sharp, critical spirit. Much is made of forms and rules, while the weightier matters, mercy and the love

[169]

of God, are neglected. Let all be cheerful. If any have clouds encompassing their souls, let them work out into the sunlight before they enter the Sabbath School. A mother who is constantly relating her discouragements, and complaining to her children of their lack of appreciation, cannot have proper control of them. So will it be with you, teachers and superintendents. If you see a lack in this respect, do not lessen your influence by speaking of it; but in a quiet way set influences to work that will correct the evil. Plan, study how to secure a well-organized, well-disciplined school. — TSS 16-19.

A Child's Observation

There was a general superintendent of Sabbath Schools who, while addressing a Sabbath School upon one occasion, was very dry, lengthy, and uninteresting. A mother asked her daughter of ten years if she enjoyed the exercise, and also, "What did the minister say?" Said the little girl "He said, and he said, and he said, and he didn't say anything." Now, we do not want any such account of our labor as that. We want the very best of training for the work that we can possibly have ourselves, so that we can make a success in teaching others the things that we have learned. — TSS 111, 112.

Punctuality

It is a sad failing with many that they are always behind time on Sabbath morning. They are very

[170]

particular about their own time, they cannot afford to lose an hour of that; but the Lord's time, the only day out of the seven that the Lord claims as His, and requires us to devote to Him, quite a portion of this is squandered away by sleeping late in the morning. In this they are robbing God. It causes them to be behind in everything; it makes confusion in the family; and finally results in the tardiness of the entire family at Sabbath School, and perhaps at meeting. Now why can we not rise early with the birds, and offer praise and thanksgiving to God? Try it, brethren and sisters. Have your preparations all made the day before, and come promptly to the Sabbath School and meeting, and you will thereby not only benefit others, but you will reap rich blessings for yourselves. — Youth's Instructor, March 19, 1879.

Punctuality and decision in the work and cause of God are highly essential. — 3T 500.

Begin at the Appointed Hour

Meetings for conference and prayer should not be made tedious. All should, if possible, be prompt to the hour appointed; and if there are dilatory ones, who are half an hour or fifteen minutes even behind the time, there should be no waiting. If there are but two present, they can claim the promise. The meeting should open at the appointed hour, if possible, be there few or many present. — Review and Herald, May 30, 1871.

[171]

Treatment of Erring Pupils

In Sabbath School work we shall be called upon to deal with those who make mistakes, who fall into sin and error. Christ has given us lessons in His word that are very plain in regard to the treatment of the erring; but many have failed to practice these lessons. They have not studied and treasured them in the heart, so that the Holy Spirit could enlighten the darkened understanding, and melt and break the stony heart of both

teacher and pupil. The Holy Spirit will make the heart sensitive, sympathetic, and rid it of pride and selfishness.

Pupils in Sabbath School are likely to do that which will annoy the teacher, by their misconduct. But the teacher must not speak sharp words, and manifest an uncontrolled spirit; for in so doing he will not be using the sword of the Spirit, but the weapons of Satan. Although the misconduct of the scholar is trying, although the evil must be corrected, the rules observed, and justice respected, yet let the teacher keep the way of the Lord, and mingle mercy with justice. Let him look to the cross of Calvary, beholding there how mercy and truth have met together, how righteousness and peace have kissed each other. There, through the divine sacrifice, man may be reconciled to God. In contemplating the love of Christ, your heart will be softened to deal with the youth as with younger members of the Lord's family. You will remember that they are Christ's property,

[172]

and your disposition will be to deal with them after the manner in which Christ has dealt with you.

Harsh dealing will never help the youth to see his errors, or aid him to reform. Let the rules and regulations of the school be carried out in the Spirit of Jesus, and when reproof must be given, let this disagreeable work be done with sorrow blended with love. Do not feel that it is your work to openly rebuke the pupil, and thus humiliate him before the whole school. This will not be a proper example to set before the children, for it will be as seed that will bear a like harvest. Never publish the errors of any pupil outside the circle in which they must be known; for, if this is done, sympathy will be created for the wrongdoer, by leaving an impression on the mind that he has been dealt with unjustly. By exposing the wrongdoer, he may be thrown upon Satan's battlefield, and from that moment go steadily downward. Christ bears long with us, and we must be Christlike. He does not cut us off because of our errors, but reproves in tenderness, and by love draws us close to Himself.

Wisdom and Patience Needed

If teachers see that it is impossible to bring a student under the discipline of the class, let him be removed to another class, for it may be that another teacher may be able to supply the deficiency. What one teacher lacks, another may possess; but if you can obtain the confidence of the youth, and bind him to your heart through cords of sympathy and love

[173]

you may win a soul to Christ. The wayward, self-willed, independent boy may become transformed in character.

But while it is necessary to manifest love and sympathy for your pupils, it is a manifest weakness to show partiality, and thus arouse suspicion and jealousy. Children are quick to discern the preferences of the teacher, and the favored student often measures his strength, his aptness, and skill with that of the teacher in the management of the class. He may decide to be master; and unless the teacher has the grace of Christ, he will manifest weakness, become impatient, exacting, and severe. The leading spirit of the class will generally impart his purpose to other students, and there will be a combined effort to obtain the mastery. If the teacher, through the grace of Christ, is self-controlled, and holds the lines with a steady, patient hand, he will quell the boisterous element, keep his self-respect, and command the respect of his students. When once order is restored, let kindness, gentleness, and affection be manifested. It may be that rebellion will rise again and again, but let not the hasty temper appear. Do not speak sharply to the evildoer, and discourage a soul who is struggling with the powers of darkness. Be still, and let your heart ascend in prayer to God for help. Angels will come close to your side, and help you to lift up the standard against the enemy; and instead of cutting off the erring one, you may be enabled to gain a soul for Christ. — TSS 77-80.

[174]

How to Gain Respect

Let teachers feel that, whatever the character of the difficulty, they must meet it in the spirit of Jesus. Do not meet

combateness with combateness. You will have to deal with willfulness, stubbornness, indolence, and frivolity; but under all emergencies manifest kindness and love, and by patience and self-control, keep your hold upon your pupils' affection, and let them have reason to know that your whole desire is to do them good. Show your scholars that you have confidence in them. Visit them at their homes, and invite them to your home. Let it be seen that you love them not only in word, but in deed and in truth.

The teacher need lay no special claims to dignity, since he can gain the respect of his pupils in no other way than by a Christlike deportment, in manifesting kindness and Christian courtesy. The teacher is to educate the pupils as Christ educated His disciples. He must make impressions that time cannot efface. His influence should mold his scholars after the divine Pattern; and if he does this, eternity alone will tell the value of his labor. The teacher must awaken in his pupils the moral nature, and inspire in them a desire to respond to the divine agencies.

Breaking the Will

Those who are selfish, peevish, dictatorial, coarse, and rough, who do not carefully regard the feelings of others, should never be employed as teachers.

[175]

They will have a disastrous influence upon their students, molding them after their own character, thus perpetuating evil. Persons of this character will make an effort to break a boy's will, if he is unruly; but Christ has authorized no such manner of dealing with the erring. Through heavenly wisdom, through meekness and lowliness of heart, teachers may be able to direct the will, and lead in the way of obedience; but let no one imagine that by threatening, the affection of the student may be gained. We must work as Christ has worked.

Many underestimate the evil of an error in themselves who fully recognize its influence in another. On every side we meet those who are entirely ignorant of possessing characteristics

which need to be modified. Others can see their objectionable traits of character; but when they are reprov'd, they imagine that they have been misjudged. The teacher should closely examine his own heart, in the light of eternity, that he may represent before his pupils that which he desires them to be. He should be a daily learner in the school of Christ, abiding in Christ as the branch abides in the vine, that he may impart to others that which he has received from Christ.

Self-discipline

The teacher who would bring his students under discipline must himself first come under the control of Christ. Jesus has said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of

[176]

life." With divine enlightenment you can work as Christ worked; for His light may shine through you upon the pathway of every impenitent transgressor with whom you are associated. Are you indeed an instructor in the ways of God? If you are a converted teacher, you will be able to win, not drive, to attract, not repulse, the souls for whom Christ has died. You will guard and care for the sheep and lambs of Christ's fold. If they stray, you will not leave them to perish, but will go forth to seek and to save that which is lost. All heaven will be ready to aid you in this good work. The angels will aid you in your effort to find the key to the heart of the most incorrigible and unruly. You will receive special grace and strength through Christ, who is able to supply you from His immeasurable fullness. You will then be qualified to be a laborer together with God, one with Christ in your effort to save the lost, and the result of your labor of love will be seen not only in time, but through all eternity. — TSS 80-82.

Remembering Our Own Childhood Experience

Some parents — and some teachers, as well — seem to forget that they themselves were once children. They are dignified, cold, and unsympathetic. Wherever they are brought in contact with the young, — at home, in the day school, the Sabbath

School, or the church, — they maintain the same air of authority, and their faces habitually wear a solemn, reproving expression.

[177]

Childish mirth or waywardness, the restless activity of the young life, finds no excuse in their eyes. Trifling misdemeanors are treated as grave sins. Such discipline is not Christlike. Children thus trained fear their parents or teachers, but do not love them; they do not confide to them their childish experiences. Some of the most valuable qualities of mind and heart are chilled to death, as a tender plant before the wintry blast.

Smile, parents; smile, teachers. If your heart is sad, let not your face reveal the fact. Let the sunshine from a loving, grateful heart light up the countenance. Unbend from your iron dignity, adapt yourselves to the children's needs, and make them love you. You must win their affection, if you would impress religious truth upon their heart. — FE 68.

The Power of Silence

Those who desire to control others must first control themselves. To deal passionately with a child or youth will only arouse his resentment. When a parent or teacher becomes impatient, and is in danger of speaking unwisely, let him remain silent. There is wonderful power in silence.

The teacher must expect to meet perverse dispositions and obdurate hearts. But in dealing with them he should never forget that he himself was once a child, in need of discipline. Even now, with all his advantages of age, education, and experience, he

[178]

often errs, and is in need of mercy and forbearance. In training the youth he should consider that he is dealing with those who have inclinations to evil similar to his own. They have almost everything to learn, and it is much more difficult for some to

learn than for others. With the dull pupil he should bear patiently, not censuring his ignorance, but improving every opportunity to give him encouragement. With sensitive, nervous pupils he should deal very tenderly. A sense of his own imperfections should lead him constantly to manifest sympathy and forbearance toward those who also are struggling with difficulties.

The Saviour's rule, — "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise," — should be the rule of all who undertake the training of children and youth. They are the younger members of the Lord's family, heirs with us of the grace of life. Christ's rule should be sacredly observed toward the dullest, the youngest, the most blundering, and even toward the erring and rebellious. . . .

Christ's Outstretched Arms

The divine Teacher bears with the erring through all their perversity. His love does not grow cold; His efforts to win them do not cease. With outstretched arms He waits to welcome again and again the erring, the rebellious, and even the apostate. His heart is touched with the helplessness of the little child subject to rough usage. The cry of human suffering never reaches His ear in vain. Though all

[179]

are precious in His sight, the rough, sullen, stubborn dispositions draw most heavily upon His sympathy and love; for He traces from cause to effect. The one who is most easily tempted, and is most inclined to err, is the special object of his solicitude.

Every parent and every teacher should cherish the attributes of Him who makes the cause of the afflicted, the suffering, and the tempted, His own. He should be one who can have "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." Jesus treats us far better than we deserve; and as He has treated us, so we are to treat others. The course of no parent or teacher is justifiable if it is unlike that which under similar

circumstances the Saviour would pursue. — TSS 119-121.

Discipline and Order Essential

There should be discipline and order in our Sabbath Schools. Children who attend these schools should prize the privileges they enjoy, and should be required to observe the regulations of the school. — TSS 7, 8.

If Christ is abiding in his [the teacher's] heart by faith, sin appears revolting. While he will have love, kindness, and tenderness for the scholars under his charge, he will feel that as a faithful servant he must discipline and preserve order in his class. If truth is cherished, the love of the Saviour is revealed in

[180]

his words and deportment. The word of God with him is not a dead letter; he will give not only lip service, but heart service. — TSS 25, 26,

Maintain Self-control

The scholars in your class may be perverse and stubborn, inclined to evil, they may severely test your patience, and yet their hearts are soil into which you may sow heavenly seed that will bear a harvest for good. If the teacher is not imbued with the Spirit of God, he will become discouraged, lose his self-control, and, by an impatient word, by a severe reprimand, may cut off all his influence, and make a failure of his work. — TSS 44.

Reprimand, Accusation, Fretting, Useless

It will do no good to reprimand, and accuse, and fret at your scholars when they manifest a spirit of unrest and mischievousness. Remember you are to be a patient laborer together with God, and that all heaven is interested in the work you are doing, and any part in the work of God means toil and travail of soul. "Quit you like men, be strong." Ask of your Master, who submitted to humiliation, and who endured the

death of the cross, what He would have you to do. Take all your entrusted talents with you into the work, and put them out to the exchangers. Through the grace of Christ you will be able to do a precious work for the Master. The wealth of divine resources is at your command, and through prayer

[181]

and faith you may lay hold on the promises of God, and appropriate them to your need.

Love a Subduing Power

Consecrate yourself and your all to the service of Him who hath loved you, and hath given Himself for you. Jesus says, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." This means in the Sabbath School work as much as in the work of the minister. Now is the golden opportunity to sow precious seed that will spring up and bear fruit unto eternal life. Now you may be a savor of life unto life; for when you can impart to others truth that you have gained through a deep experience, it has a life-giving power that will impress hearts and draw them to Jesus. When Jesus is drawing, and His colaborers are working in harmony with Him, hard indeed must be the heart that will not be impressed and subdued by the power of divine love. — TSS 69, 70.

Competitions and Prizes

On Sabbath morning [Marshalltown, Iowa, campground, August 16, 1884], a large company met for Sabbath School. Classes were soon arranged including all except a few who chose seats outside the tent. But these were not left to themselves; teachers were appointed, and two or three interesting classes formed. All were as busy as bees, and everywhere, in the tent and out of it, was heard the hum of voices. The

[182]

school was well conducted and orderly, and to me the exercises were very interesting. [THIS PARAGRAPH FROM THE

REVIEW AND HERALD OF OCTOBER 21, 1884, WAS OMITTED IN TSS.]

By request I spoke about thirty minutes, warning them against letting their Sabbath School degenerate into a mere mechanical routine. We should not seek to imitate Sunday schools, nor keep up the interest by offering prizes. The offering of rewards will create rivalry, envy, and jealousy; and some who are the most diligent and worthy will receive little credit. Scholars should not try to see how many verses they can learn and repeat; for this brings too great a strain upon the ambitious child, while the rest become discouraged.

Try none of these methods in your Sabbath Schools; but let superintendents and teachers make every effort to have life and interest in their schools. What a blessing it would be if all would teach as Jesus taught! He did not aim to attract attention by eloquence or by overwhelming grandeur of sentiment. On the contrary, His language was plain, and His thoughts were expressed with greatest simplicity; but He spoke with loving earnestness. In your teaching be as near like Him as possible. Make your exercises interesting. Let the teachers show that they have thoroughly learned the lesson, and are intensely interested in it. Let there be no frivolous or superficial interpretations of the Scriptures, but let each be prepared to go to the bottom of the subject presented. — TSS 110, 111.

[183]

The Sabbath School and the Church Service

The Sabbath School at ----- was made the one great theme of interest with Brother E. It absorbed the minds of the young, while other religious duties were neglected. Frequently, after the Sabbath School was closed, the superintendent, a number of teachers, and quite a number of scholars, would return home to rest. They felt that their burden for the day was ended, and that they had no further duty. When the bell sounded forth the hour for public service, and the people left their homes for the house of worship, they would meet a large portion of the school passing to their homes. And, however

important the meeting, the interest of a large share of the Sabbath School could not be awakened to take any pleasure in the instruction given by the minister upon important Bible subjects. While many of the children did not attend public service, some that remained were not advantaged by the word spoken, for they felt that it was a wearisome tax. — TSS 7.

Small Company Sabbath Schools

Companies of Sabbathkeepers may be raised up in many places. Often they will not be large companies; but they must not be neglected; they must not be left to die for want of proper personal effort and training. The work should not be left prematurely. See that all are intelligent in the truth, established in the faith, and interested in every branch of the work, before leaving them for another field. . . .

[184]

It has been proved in the missionary field that, whatever may be the preaching talent, if the laboring part is neglected, if the people are not taught how to work, how to conduct meetings, how to act their part in missionary labor, how to reach people successfully, the work will be nearly a failure. There is much to be done in the Sabbath School work, also, in bringing the people to realize their obligation and to act their part. God calls them to work for Him, and the ministers should guide their efforts. — TSS 109.

The Camp Meeting Sabbath School

Dear brethren and sisters who assemble at our camp meetings, we wish to address to you a few words in the interest of our Sabbath Schools. This is one of the important branches of the work, and should not be left to chance, or to haphazard management. If these schools are conducted as they should be, the efforts made in the pulpit to present the truth in a manner to win souls may be deepened; and if the labor bestowed is followed up by interested workers in the Sabbath School, much good will be accomplished. But it is not enough to have the Sabbath School move like well-regulated machinery. There should be practical workers; the teachers

should be of that class who have a living connection with God, who have an appetite for study themselves, who will give time and moral earnestness to their work, and who will not be satisfied unless they see something accomplished. . . .

[185]

It is important that the exercises in our camp meeting Sabbath Schools be conducted with order, promptness, and efficiency. Then the right mold will be given to Sabbath Schools in the different churches, as the people return to their homes. Do not allow business and other interests to crowd out the Sabbath School interest, so that it shall be considered a matter of no special consequence. — TSS 12-14.

Local Institutes Suggested

Instruction in regard to conducting the Sabbath School should, to a large degree, be given in the home churches; for the labor can be made more direct and the results will be more permanent if instruction is given at home. This work does not require the services of the ministers; they should be free to attend to the spiritual interests of the people. They are to teach others what to do. They must instruct the people as to how to come to the Lord and how to lead others to Him. — TSS 113, 114.

Sabbath School Conventions

Question. [NOTE. — FOLLOWING REMARKS OF MRS. E. G. WHITE TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE, AT LAKE GOGUAC, NEAR BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN, JULY 14, 1890, QUESTIONS WERE ASKED BY VARIOUS MINISTERS, AND ANSWERED BY HER. THE QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE Sabbath School WORK ARE HERE QUOTED.] — Would you think, Sister White, that taking up the detail work of drilling the Sabbath School workers would come under the same head? [That is, drilling canvassers, and missionary workers, and holding cooking schools at our camp meetings.]

[186]

Answer. — Exactly; it is not the place for it. That is to be done; but it has its time and place.

Ques. — Suppose they should call a Sabbath School convention, and meet for that purpose?

Ans. — That is all right; and have those engaged to carry the burden of that work, and not hold the people there [at the camp meeting] to hear those particular things. They have no special work in that branch to do. The time is too precious to be spent in that way. — TSS 114.