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HINTS TO SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance."—2 PER. i. 13.

KNOW the relation in which you, as Sabbath-school teachers, stand to God, and to the children in your classes. Look upon the children as being placed under your care and influence for a time, not merely by their parents at home, or by the superintendent in the school, but by the All-wise Disposer of every event, so that you may feel your responsibility to Him in all you say and do.

Recognizing the relation in which you stand to the children as their teacher, and to God as His servant, in His sight and presence, about to engage in His work, then proceed—

II. To train up the children in the way they should go, by word and example, as you have opportunity. To glorify God in so doing, at the end you must steadily and always keep in view: and in doing so—

(1.) You need to know the way in which you should train up the children to go, and be yourselves walking in it. Are you desirous of having the children brought to Christ, and their minds enlightened to the knowledge of themselves and of Him? Then be ye found in Christ, and walking as children of the light. Will you bring Christ's words to the children, and tell them that *He is the way, and the truth, and the life, and that him that cometh unto Him, He will in no wise cast out?* Well, see to it that you yourselves do know these solemn truths you now intend to teach. Have you found reconciliation with God in and through Christ? Have you found Him to be spiritual life to your own souls, naturally dead in trespasses and in sins? Have you been united to Christ, and are you living in communion with him? These solemn questions must be answered by your own consciences to Him who searcheth the heart; who knows what is in man, and cannot be deceived. Your thoughts and feelings are open to the inspection of God, but your word and actions are all the grounds that others can have for thinking that these things are so. Your word we already have. You have professed your faith in Christ. You have declared, before God and man, that you are Christ's, and that Christ is yours. You have become members of Christ's church on earth, and have declared your readiness and willingness—yea, your determination to go forth in the Lord's strength, to do the Lord's work. Your word of profession should be expressive of your conversion to Christ, and the fact of your being in Christ, and abiding in Him, is the surest guarantee that you will faithfully discharge the duties of Sabbath-school teachers. And the faithful discharge of these, and other Christian duties devolving upon

you, will be the strongest evidence to the world that you *are* what you profess to be.

(2.) You need also to know the *means* to be used for accomplishing the *end* you have in view as Sabbath-school teachers. This is *due preparation*. Here let me remark, that you ought to give heed to the particular lesson of the day. Some people imagine that they have so much theology that they can just turn to any passage of the Bible at any time and teach children. It is a great mistake. Preparation is needed in order to teach children as well as adults. It may not be necessary to search into the deep mysteries of revealed truth *for the purpose* of bringing them before the minds of the children. But whilst strong meat must be prepared for *men*, the sincere milk of the Word must be drawn out for the children. And think not that you will be able to bring forward the simple truth of the gospel in a simple manner, with suitable illustrations, so as to *arrest* and keep up the attention of the children for any length of time, without *due preparation*.

I mean by due preparation, (1.) An understanding of the terms made use of in the lesson; (2.) An understanding of the doctrine contained in the lesson; (3.) The selection of familiar illustrations of those doctrines; and (4.) The capability of communicating to the children the ideas you would have them receive. Without a clear understanding of the meaning of the terms, you will not be able to show the children that the doctrine is expressed in those terms. If you know not the true doctrine, how can you expect the food you give the children to be to their spiritual nourishment? Without suitable illustrations, unholy children will *refuse* the doctrine. The naked truth will be to their unsanctified hearts as food to a sick stomach. But without ability to communicate your ideas to the children, what will avail all your teaching? You may speak, and the children may hear, but if you cannot get them to understand you will be like those that beat the air, exhausting yourselves but leaving little impression on the hearts and minds of the children.

Make use, then, of your dictionaries, geographies, histories, encyclopædias, &c., in order to get the true meaning of the words as they stand in the lesson. Be often in your closets, with your Bibles, at a throne of grace, that ye may know the doctrine. The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord. Be often in the homes of the children, that you may learn the amount and kind of knowledge they possess, and the kind of influences which bears upon them, that you may be more able to bring forward illustrations of the truth, which shall be familiar and interesting to them. And embrace, I beseech you, all the opportunities within your reach, for better qualifying you for communicating knowledge to the chil-

dren. You will derive much aid from attending a teacher's meeting, when such a meeting is conveniently held for the purpose of prayerful deliberation upon the truths taught in the lesson. In proportion as you attend such meetings regularly, and take an active part in all the proceedings, so will you really profit by them. In all such meetings you will find a blessing in contributing your mite of knowledge to the common fund, as well as in receiving thence. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Strive to learn, and strive to let others know, and in so doing you will lose nothing, and gain much.

III. You should give good heed to your *manner* of doing things in presence of the children. Let your manner of life be always in accordance with the doctrines you teach. The children will be greatly influenced by your manner of coming to school, your manner of teaching, and your manner of discipline.

(1.) With regard to your manner of coming to school, I shall only mention the duty of punctuality. I hope it is one that you will feel to be of great importance, and one which you will daily practise. Without punctuality there will be little good order in your classes. Without rigid punctuality on *your* part, you cannot expect, nor will there *be*, rigid punctuality on the part of the children, and want of punctuality on their part is the highway to disorder in the class. With grace and strength from on high, be prepared to come. Always bear in mind that your own presence in the class is vastly preferable to that of a substitute, and, therefore, make a strenuous effort, though at the cost of some self-denial, that your respective classes may be taught regularly *by yourselves*. At the appointed time be at your posts. Recognize yourselves there as the servants of God, and the work before you as His. Then, whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, and leave the result to God.

(2.) With regard to your manner of teaching, as opportunity presents itself, take advantage of model lessons. You will find, however, that Jesus himself is the best model teacher. Study His system—the kind of illustrations He uses, and his method of using them. See, for example, how He educes the meaning of the term *neighbour*, bringing before His pupil's mind the neighbourly conduct of the good Samaritan. Strive not only to be able to teach, but apt to teach.

(3.) With regard to discipline, too, where you at times may find some difficulty, you would do well to follow the example that God sets in *His* mode of dealing with you as sinners, to lead you to repentance. He maketh you experience His goodness, and His goodness leadeth thee to repentance. You may often be perplexed by a

naughty child, but despise not the riches of goodness, forbearance and long-suffering in dealing with him. If he does ill, show your abhorrence of the ill, but do not let him feel the influence of an angry master. Do him good. If he offend again, exercise forbearance. If he continue to vex you by ill-doing, continue you to suffer long and unweariedly in well-doing.

But mark you, not every kind of goodness will lead to repentance. The goodness of the idol, that lets the idolater live in sin, and at the same time retain his hope of escaping future punishment, may lead the sinner to ruin, but not to repentance. The goodness of the priest, who offers to pardon the guilty on certain conditions may lead the sinner to do penance, but not to repentance. The goodness of an over-indulgent mother, who, having found her darling guilty, with threatenings sentences him accordingly, and, at the same time, permits him to escape, may lead the naughty one, with impunity, to *repeat* the offence, but it will not lead him to *repent*. It is the goodness of God that leadeth to repentance—a strict marking of iniquity—never passing it by—always manifesting the same abhorrence of it—hating the abominable thing always, yet always loving the sinner—fornbearing, suffering long, and still doing good—marking and punishing the sinner's sin, and making the sinner see and feel His wondrous love. Such goodness melts the sinner's heart—leads him to repentance. So heap coals of fire upon the naughty children's heads. Mark, detest, abhor, and check the evil, as it begins to manifest itself in naughtiness. Let the children feel that you love *them*, while you hate their sin. Be firm, yet kind. Abhor the evil done, and love the evil-doer. Let the naughty child experience such goodness, and it, if anything on your part will do it, will lead him to repentance.

In conclusion, do not think that your path, as Sabbath-school teachers, will be bestrewed with roses and fragrant flowers alone. You will find the thorns and briars of bitter disappointment there. But be not discouraged, although results may not be according to your anticipations. Be instant in season and out of season. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand. Enter into thy closet. Meditate, and pray to thy Father who seeth in secret. There get understanding and wisdom from above. Go thence to your classes. Teach—train. Return unto the Lord, and pour out your heart's desire unto Him. Consult Him in everything. Leave your case in His hands. Give thanks, and take courage.

"That man, who, bearing precious seed,
In going forth doth mourn,

He, doubtless, bringing back his sheaves,
Rejoicing shall return." G. G.

[FROM A FRIEND IN KIRKCOUDBRIGHTSHIRE.]

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