

SOMETHING ABOUT TEACHERS' MEETINGS.

The teachers' meeting is not so much to get facts as to vivify and arrange them. The leader does not teach the lesson unless he teaches how to teach the lesson. This is a place for comparison.

The meeting is perhaps less to make plans for the teachers than to stimulate them to make plans for themselves. The gathering is not to listen to a lecture. You cannot make teachers, except by the Socratic method. A teachers' meeting is not a Bible class.

The ideal teachers' meeting focuses on the work of each the helpfulness and skill of all. The leader, then, must put into the meeting every one's peculiar talent, and must draw out from the meeting for every one's peculiar need. And do not—as so many teachers' meetings do—let the teachers for the older classes run away with the evening.

The right kind of teachers' meeting keeps up the teachers. It "draws," because it is attractive. The only way to build up an attendance is to build up the interest of the meeting to be attended. Nevertheless, attention to a few bits of detail will greatly assist in building up the attendance. Have a constitution, a full set of officers, and stated business meetings. Make the teachers feel that they "belong." Many a teachers' meeting goes to pieces for lack of something to tie to. Cultivate the feeling of responsibility. Insist on rotation in office. Give every teacher possible some regular duty, if only to pass the hymn-books.

Once a year at least let the teachers' meeting have a field day. Get up its finest programme, with a special view to interesting the entire church in Sunday-school work. Then invite the entire church to hear it. Such an open meeting should come just before the beginning of a new line of study.

The teachers' meeting, in many small places, will be a union meeting, of all the evangelical churches, and sometimes of neighboring churches in cities. What finer close to a year's harmonious work than for all the teachers of this union meeting to sit down to dinner together at a genuine love-feast!

Attendance is in many cases increased by providing a variety of leaders. The brightest

of men becomes wearisome ere long; his methods grow familiar. The heart of the teachers' meeting is the programme committee ever pumping in fresh blood. Arrange with neighboring towns for the loan or exchange of helpful leaders.

There is a certain gain in a uniform programme for the hour, so that historical explanations, difficult exegesis, blackboard work, plans for the little folks, lesson analysis, and so on, may be taken up in a uniform order each evening. This will insure against the omission of any line of work.

Let one teacher—a new one for each quarter—be appointed to present within ten or fifteen minutes an outline of work for the younger classes. If this teacher cannot draw, an assistant should be appointed who can. The remainder of the time, after these regular exercises are over, will be at the disposal of the leader of the evening, who will treat the lesson in general. Some such combination of permanent with changing leadership will be found exceedingly helpful and attractive.

Who should lead the teachers' meeting? Teachers. Not exhorters; not conversational monopolists; not lecturers. None of these, but teachers. The obscure layman, if he knows how to ask wise questions. No one for compliment, no one for custom, but every one for practical utility, for learning how to teach.

See that the meeting begins on time, whether the leader is ready or not, and even if no audience is present. There will be an improvement next time. Promptness begets promptness. And let the meeting close on time, though in the midst of the most interesting discussion. All the better to leave a little interest as a nest-egg. Open with prayer. Some teachers' meetings also open with singing. One verse is better than two.

It is useful to read the lesson text in the meeting, provided the reading is made to teach something. The manner should be varied. Let the leader request the teachers to take up the reading whenever he stops, and let him stop at eccentric places, to hold attention. Let the teachers read each verse in the King James version, the leader responding with the Revision.

In a passage where description or narrative alternates with speeches, let the leader read