

It may be added that the teacher's work in the capacity of adviser will be more effective and lasting, than if he acts, even though unconsciously, the autocrat or dictator.

For one thing, the teacher will be all the better *teacher* for being an adviser, and all the poorer teacher for seeking to control the Class and to make his point of view the governing one.

Moreover, the position of adviser presupposes a relationship between teacher and member involving confidence and respect on the one hand, and a spirit of helpfulness on the other that make for harmony and good results.

The day of the autocrat is passing; that of the adviser and friend is here.

Toronto

A Word in Time

"A word spoken in time
May save the boy at nine;
But at nineteen, or a few years more,
Nine words won't do what one did
before."

Talking to Children

By Miss Bessie B. Maxwell

II. PLAIN LANGUAGE

Paul, when he said, "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue," probably had reference to distinctly different languages and desired to confine himself to the one most generally understood. But his view-point is a splendid one for adoption by every public speaker in a Sabbath School.

It is perhaps not too sweeping a statement to say that, generally speaking, less than one half of any address or review in Sunday School penetrates to the mind and brain of the majority of the scholars. Why? Because it is delivered in an "unknown tongue." The speaker forgets how limited is the vocabulary of a child, and uses unfamiliar words which convey as little meaning, as if couched in a foreign language.

Any one who is at all familiar with public school work knows the amazing ignorance

found even among higher grade pupils of the meaning of quite common words, and has met the difficulty of "translating" dictionary definitions into simpler terms to ensure even a partial comprehension of many—to us—ordinary words and phrases.

A little experience of this kind should go a long way towards reforming our speech and simplifying our language, and causing us to realize that length of word does not always denote length of head. Shortening our syllables will usually shorten the distance between our mind and that of the child.

The teacher, in the classroom, is not at the same disadvantage as one who speaks to the School in general, as the questioning on both sides will show where elimination or substitution or explanation must be applied. The public speaker has no such chance and must therefore be still more guarded.

Unfamiliar terms set the mind groping after their possible meaning and thus familiar words may fall on deaf ears. Many reviews are complete failures because the questions are not understood, and the pupils, rather than the person in charge, are usually—and unjustly—blamed for the lack of response. Likewise, many addresses have little effect except to produce disorder, simply because they contain too many words of too many syllables.

Our aim is not to display an extensive vocabulary of polysyllables, else it were wise to select a more appreciative audience. We must then practise, with a view to perfection, the art of expressing our ideas in the child's own natural terms, carefully discarding all unnecessary words and syllables. We will then probably be surprised at the small number of words we really need "to work with," and will no longer hide the spirit of our thought under a heavy and useless garment of unfamiliar letters.

Christ's talks with His disciples, His parables, etc., may well be our models in simplicity of language and suitability of term. Our only safe rule in addressing children of any age is to use the shortest, simplest, plainest words that will convey the truth we wish to teach or the story we have to tell.

Westville, N.S.