

The teachers' meeting must be a lens in which the rays of light are gathered and focused into one single beam of intense brightness and power. The teachers' meeting is necessary because the Sunday-school stands for organized effort, and because it lives for a principle and with a definite aim. Interdenominational, it is none the less denominational, though never sectarian. The school may never attempt to do its work atomistically; all its efforts must bear the stamp of unity, and the possibility of this unity lies in the teachers' meeting. A self-sufficient teacher, who needs no other light but his own, is rarely a success in the class.

The ideal of the teachers' meeting is therefore the unification of that which is multiform, the conversion of the unlike into the like, the broadening of the teachers' horizon, the quickening of new ideas, and the cultivation of a common enthusiasm.

When the question is farther asked, how such a meeting had best be conducted, that question presupposes that it must be conducted, that it does not conduct itself, that its success requires leadership.

There is a sharp distinction between a normal Bible class and a teachers' meeting. The first is to be taught, the second is to be led. Without competent leadership this meeting is a caricature.

It is no debating-club, no convenience for hobby-riding, but an hour of earnest and devoted preparation for the work of teaching immortal souls. Whoever ceases to learn can never successfully teach. Hence the need of this meeting. And competent leadership is required to give tone and direction to its work. It seems, therefore, preferable that the leadership of this meeting should be a permanent rather than a shifting office.

As to the question who this leader is to be, the answer is, simply, the one who is best adapted for it. All things being equal, the pastor of the church is likely to be the most competent man in the field; yet not necessarily so, for not every good preacher is a good teacher. If he fails in this respect, the pastor should have grace enough willingly to make place for a better man.

The leader should be apt, tactful, enthusiastic, sympathetic, a man of some pedagogic ability. Himself thoroughly prepared, he

must draw out what is best and most original in the preparatory work of the others.

On this whole matter we cannot sufficiently recommend to every leader and teacher the careful perusal of Dr. Trumbull's "Yale Lectures on the Sunday-School," and his little monograph on "Teachers' Meetings," which should be in every teacher's hands. The best—in fact, the only efficient—method is the Socratic method. The leader who harangues the meeting, and thus monopolizes its time, is judged by the application of his method to class work. Such a teacher is doomed to failure, and so is the leader. This method necessarily cultivates bad habits in the teachers, of slovenly preparation, and it substitutes the uniform for the multiform. It is supremely egotistic, and hides the many points of view from which the lesson may be considered. It endangers the success of the school by the possibility of creating poor copies of a bad example.

The teaching method may therefore be said to be the only one allowable in the teachers' meeting. The leader's work is not so much the communication of ideas as the generation of thought. Its ideal lies in the German *aufzischen*, and in the Latin *educare*. It aims to draw one out of one's self and upward to a higher level. It stands for growth.

To such an ideal teacher's meeting each teacher brings his own store of information, and it is the leader's task, by tactful questions, and apt, suggestive answers, to combine, and to enlarge, and to quicken, and to unify this variegated information, till, by the prismatic action of the hour of preparation, the acquirements of individuals become the possession of all alike, melting into the one white ray of truth.

This method is infinitely harder, and requires infinitely more, than that of preaching to the teachers, but its results will be stimulating and abiding helpful. It does not extinguish, but it accentuates, individuality of the various teachers, and will spur them on to the best efforts of which they are capable, and its fruits will be noticeable in the work of the school.

No school should be without a teachers' meeting, and no teachers'-meeting should be without a correct apprehension of its task and its ideals.—*Prof. Dosken, in S. S. Times.*