

Our Teacher Training Classes

By Mrs. Colin Fletcher

A rather serious problem confronts the average Bible Class scholar, when asked to fill a vacancy for the day, in the teaching ranks; for, coupled with natural timidity, there is usually a strong sense of incompetence. Nothing tests one's knowledge so thoroughly as teaching. Facts, of which one felt fairly certain, assume a distant haziness, when one is confronted by eight or ten pairs of eyes.

The consciousness of a lack in teaching ability, led to the formation of Teacher Training Classes in our Sabbath Schools. Our minds had been gradually turned in this direction by a Bible Question drill held at the close of the Lesson each Sunday, and, with written examinations at the end of each quarter, we were somewhat prepared for the larger idea.

As a help to others, let me say, that our Training Classes were composed of members ranging in age from eighteen to fifty, some of whom had never tried a written examination in their lives, while others were school teachers; but nearly all who took up the study continued, in spite of many drawbacks, until the coveted Diploma was won. Age, therefore, should not deter, nor lack of early opportunities discourage. It may be said, however, that the older members are usually well acquainted with their Bibles, if not skilled in giving expression to their knowledge.

At the close of the second year's work, it will be found that, almost unconsciously, there has been a widening of outlook and a spiritual quickening. Our Bibles are more to us, sermons and magazine articles are better appreciated and our minds in more receptive mood. Instead of the sense of helplessness experienced on former occasions, when asked to become a teacher or serve as a substitute, we take our place before the class, feeling that we know enough of God's Word, and how to teach it, at least to hold the attention of the pupils.

Only after taking up this Course, will one find out how many minutes can be spared for its study. It is the busy ones, not the idle, who enter the lists.

In many cases, there has to be a selection

of the subjects in the prescribed Course, but if possible, every Bible Class scholar should, if only for his own personal advantage, push on diligently to the end, and reap the reward of acquiring a teaching knowledge of the Book.

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Book Talks

IV. JAMES ROBERTSON

By Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, D.D.

Everyone admires the man who does things, and especially the man who does things that are worth while. And when the story of his doings is told by one who knows how to tell a story, the charm is quite irresistible. Parkman's histories of the pioneers of North America, and Dawson's Life of Bishop Hannington are books of this sort.

So also is Ralph Connor's Life of James Robertson, published last Christmas, and which no Sunday School library, especially no Presbyterian Sunday School library, can afford to be without.

How well Ralph Connor can tell a story, everyone knows who has read Black Rock, and The Sky Pilot, and The Man from Gengarry. And his Life of James Robertson is as thrilling as the best one of these. It has this advantage, also, that it is the story of a real life, whilst the others are but fiction.

Who James Robertson was, probably most Presbyterians in Canada know; for, for twenty-five years, he was the great Missionary Superintendent of the new West. From Lake Superior to the Yukon was his field. Every mile of it, he knew, and there was no sort of difficulty that can be imagined, that this brave, strong man did not grapple with and overcome.

How all this was done, forms, however, only a part of the book. The preparation for this magnificent work for the church and the nation, is just as interesting as the doing of the work itself. How the poor Scotch boy struggled with his poverty and with the stiff problem of how to get an education, and how he won out; how, when he came as a half grown lad to Canada, he helped in cutting down the forest, and clearing up the land; how he doggedly fought his way to a school teacher's certificate; how his heart was