

Teachers' Helps.

"Of making many books there is no end," said the wisest of men, a great while ago. If this was so in the days of Solomon, it is much more so in ours. And scarcely any department of publication evinces more intense activity than that which seeks to make provision for the wants of our Sunday-school workers. "Helps" well nigh innumerable are now cheaply accessible to any who may feel their need of them. There are some—to their shame be it said—who seem never to have been touched by any such consciousness of need, and in the presence of a work that well might tax an angel's power, when the question is asked, "Lord, who is sufficient for these things?" they anticipate the Lord's answer by stepping to the front.

Dr. Jeter is credited with saying that the genuine Bostonian seems to say in his bearing, "I know all things;" while the typical Charlestonian says, "What I don't know isn't worth knowing."

There are nominal teachers, who might shake hands with either. They know enough, and have only to draw upon their capital already accumulated to meet any demands that may be made upon them. If these contented and complacent teachers, ignorant of their ignorance, and insensible of their solemn responsibility, were only blessed with a spirit of "resignation," it would be a mercy.

It will be found, as a rule, that the neediest teachers are those that feel the least consciousness of need; while the ablest and the most intelligent are those who are reaching out the greediest hands to grasp whatever may be helpful in their work.

No wise preacher or teacher will feel that he can afford to ignore the ten thousand sources of intellectual and spiritual enrichment to which we have now such easy access. And yet there is need of caution. These helps must be wisely used, or there is danger of being "helped into helplessness." He that simply crams himself with the thoughts of other men, and then retails them to his class or congregation, hath but "a losing office." He becomes a sewer, instead of a fountain.

The skilful cultivator knows the need

of plentiful manuring, to replenish the soil that would otherwise be wasted by successive crops. He scatters the compost over the field; it is absorbed, decomposed, and, by virtue of nature's cunning chemistry, the compost is reaped as corn. So should the mind be enriched with fertilizers; only taking care that they be thoroughly absorbed and well digested.

Spurgeon has evidently fattened on the old Puritans, and yet every pound of him legitimately belongs to him. Beecher reads everything, but he does not servilely re-produce what he reads. He tumbles it into the furnace-fires of his own mind, fuses it, stamps it with the imprint of his genius, and uses it as his capital in business. And what is done by these men of magnificent ability, ought to be done by every man according to his measure. Do not be content with collating and committing what others have thought. Do your own thinking. Tax your faculties to the utmost stretch of effort. The effort may be painful, especially to those that have not been much accustomed to it. Make the reluctant powers submit to be held to a point until it is resolved. Thus only can your own highest development be secured, and, along with it, the power of fresh and forcible presentation of the truth to others.

The teacher who, at the last moment, catches up somebody's exposition of the lesson, hurries over it, and then hurries away to meet his class, with the exposition in his pocket, ready to be drawn out in an emergency, to refresh his memory or confirm his statements, deserves to be "retired" from a position which he thus proves himself so utterly unworthy to fill.

Among the multitude of helps, we have sometimes feared that we are in danger of overlooking some that, after all, are the best of all. One of them is the Bible itself. If we would learn the truth in its stereoscopic completeness, we must compare Scripture with Scripture—spiritual things with spiritual. "God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain." This method of studying the Word of God, so devoutly practised by the fathers, we fear is sadly neglected now. And if it be true, as we hear and fear, that our Lesson Papers are used to supersede the Bible in