

so eminently helpful. The Presbyterian Church stands ready to adopt whatever methods are most likely to advance Christ's kingdom among young and old, provided they are in harmony with the truth and spirit of Scripture. Children's Day is not now an untried experiment. Other Churches have observed it for years and with the best and most encouraging results. Its unanimous adoption by the General Assembly indicates that it is looked forward to with sanguine hope by the Church at large.

It will therefore be the endeavour of ministers, elders, Sabbath school superintendents, teachers and congregations generally to make it a day to be remembered. It will afford a pleasing variety to the ordinary services of the year. The minister will feel encouraged to do his best in preparing for the special services, as they will afford him a precious opportunity of addressing to the open and receptive minds of youth in the most direct and simple terms the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. The elders, some of whom usually take but little part in the work of the Sabbath school, will be led to feel that after all they have a deep interest in the spiritual and moral training of the young. Sabbath school superintendents and teachers will be encouraged by the fact that their special work, too much overlooked by the congregation generally, is brought more immediately under the notice of the people, who will thereby be led to take a more kindly and sympathetic interest in the work that goes steadily on from year to year. It may, however, be safe to say that none will take a more kindly interest in the observance of Children's Day than the children themselves. It will help them to understand that after all the Sabbath school is an essential part of the Church, and that they belong to it. It is true that the Presbyterian Church recognizes the children as forming a portion of the visible Church, but children are not all keen in their discernment of abstractions. The fact that a special day is set apart for their special benefit, and that the services are chiefly designed for them, will be much more clearly apprehended than any number of statements, however clear and explicit, regarding the covenant relation of children to the Church. Then, when they come to Church on Children's Day, will not their minds be in a state of expectancy, and therefore of more than ordinary receptivity? What they hear on that day will dwell in the memory. Children's Day will be looked forward to with large expectations, and will doubtless be remembered with grateful and pleasing recollections. It is incumbent therefore on all immediately interested in the approaching day that it be fittingly and profitably observed. It is highly desirable that the first of what will most probably be a long succession of Children's Days should be fully up to the expectations of those who look forward to it. Much, very much, depends upon a good beginning. Pastors and Sabbath school workers away on their vacation will travel with open and observant eyes, and valuable and pertinent illustrations will be stored for use on Children's Day.

WOMAN'S SPHERE.

It is evident from the space devoted to its discussion that the condition of woman is receiving a large share of thoughtful attention. The same old-fashioned rule so frequently applied to little ones, "Children should be seen, not heard," was taken for granted as embracing womankind under its ample sweep. Woman's sphere is now a debateable and much debated subject. As yet the mass of discordant opinion has not shaped itself definitely, but the currents in which it is destined to flow are beginning to take shape. The old and Oriental idea of womankind finds less and less favour every year. Home is woman's sphere undoubtedly, and the opportunities and work it presents are of such importance and so far reaching in their influence that whoever seeks for the sake of argument or for any reason whatever, to minimize these but faintly comprehends one of the most important elements in the discussion. Home is her sphere, and no one can take her place there. It must have the first claim on every good wife and mother. There may be strong temptations to compensate for neglect of home duties by earnest and energetic effort in other fields of Christian activity. It must in these days of multiplied and competing claims be sometimes a question of conscience how far these ought to be complied with. There is meaning in the saying recorded in the Song of Solomon, "They made me the keeper of the vineyards: but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

But all women are not restrained by engrossing home cares and duties. Many are so situated providentially that Christian and philanthropic work is both a duty and a delight. The beneficent minis-

tries exercised by self-denying women in the Church, the Sabbath school, in mission work among the neglected and the outcast, in the great missionary movement of the age, in tending the sick and the suffering show what the world would lose if woman was to be relegated to the seclusion almost universally prevalent in eastern lands.

Neither can modern ideas refuse to woman the exercise of the rights of citizenship. The time may not yet have come when women shall have as free access to the ballot box as have their fathers, husbands and brothers, but it is one of the future things that may without the spirit of divination be confidently predicted. Ladies of eminence and ability have been appealing to the public on both sides of the question, and it is difficult to see, if women really desire the franchise, how it can possibly be withheld from them. Even now the nineteenth century woman does not confine her efforts to religious and philanthropic work. Not to speak of those whose ambition is to be the leading lights in the fashionable world, the most wearing and the least satisfactory of all occupations in which they can engage. Women have of late largely entered the domain of politics. That women should take a vital interest in the moral and social movements on which the perpetuity and happiness of the home depends is not surprising. Their apathy in this sphere would be cause for wonder, but they have entered with ardour and enthusiasm the political arena. Instead of the turmoil and excitement of a keen election contest causing them to shrink, they enter on the fray with an impetuosity that causes many to gaze on the Primrose League and the kindred organization in the Liberal ranks with wide-eyed wonder, and there are many who shake their wise heads over it, and are lost in conjecture as to whither all this shall lead.

A somewhat novel phase of the question appears in a series of letters in the *Christian World*, in answer to the question "Are Husbands Tyrants?" The saddening reflection is forced upon the reader that, so far as the letters in the last number go, "the ayes have it." For once the ladies speak out; but should the ogres depicted in some of the correspondence be haunted by the suspicion that their wives have been revealing the secrets of the prison house, and taking the public into their confidence, then the consequences may be such that humane people would shudder to anticipate. The series opens with a letter from a penitent widower who had an angelic wife, and all the time he had been entertaining her unawares. He says, "I had, without doubt, the best wife ever given to man. The most patient, enduring, loving and unselfish, and yet I knew not all this till too late; although she, I know, forgave me freely, yet can I never forgive myself for the negligent and often thoughtless way in which I treated her—and yet I was counted a good husband and father and a religious man. The root of the whole matter, as I now plainly see, was selfishness"—not a doubt of it. "A Happy Wife," who has the best of husbands, takes up the cudgels vigorously on behalf of her less favoured sisters who are married to stingy and exacting husbands who think nothing of spending money freely for their own selfish gratification, and are in an extreme degree niggardly in what they dole out to their patient, suffering wives. It is a popular belief that there are such husbands who, if they recognize themselves in the mirror, "A Happy Wife" holds up to the public view, may yet become models of generosity and make their own wives happy. "A Tried and Anxious Mother" writes in a subdued and suffering strain, detailing sad grievances which are by no means imaginary. This is followed up by the sweet effusion of a widow whose husband was evidently a jewel. Before she retreats she shoots this Parthian arrow at her grumbling married sisters:

If married women would remember "That charity suffereth long, and is kind," and paid a little more deference to the men, there would be fewer complaints of the husband. Some few women are capable of stronger and more enduring work than others, but as a rule the woman is the weaker vessel both in brain and body, and so needs plenty of kindness and patience from her husband.—Hoping you will excuse my modest opinion, I am, yours truly, etc.

"A young Englishwoman" raises her sweet voice to swell the chorus of accusations against the peccant husbands. Though not under the matrimonial yoke herself she fears that which is said about "husbands in the middle-classes is only too sadly true." If unable to speak from experience she claims competency to give her opinion because of extended observations, and is half inclined to question the soundness of some of the advices given by the apostle Paul. She is followed by one who does well to veil her identity under the euphonious pen name of "Roy Vernon" for her home thrusts are sharp and telling. Others take up the lamentation, and if these

witnesses tell the truth it is high time that husbands should set about the work of self-examination and reformation without waiting for fresh outpourings of these vials of domestic wrath. "A British Grandfather" closes the series with a letter which takes a very kindly view of the situation, with the slight exception that he carries the war into the Amazons' territory.

It may be well to remember the advice given to married couples by an American humorist. "Give each other half the road, and go slow." Home presents the best sphere on earth for the cultivation of all that renders life beautiful. If the canker-worm of selfishness enters there the best fruits of the affections, the tender bloom of the Christian spirit will fade and decay. There is something mournful in the confession of the man whose letter heads the series in the *Christian World*, that he "was counted a good father and a religious man" abroad but a sadly selfish dog at home. The true spirit of religion should be seen at its best in the home circle. If it is not matured and strengthened there, wherever else it displays itself, it can only be of a poor and imperfect pattern. Woman's sphere may be world wide, but if husbands and wives do not try to be heirs together of the grace of life, the highest possible life on earth will be poisoned at its source.

Books and Magazines.

THE Central Business College, Stratford, has issued a neatly printed annual catalogue giving much valuable information relating to that energetic and flourishing institution.

STEPPING HEAVENWARD. By Mrs. E. Prentiss, New and popular edition, with illustrations. 8vo. paper covers. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Co.)—This admirable book was first published in 1868, in the columns of the *Advance*, a newspaper in Chicago. As it is often the case with books of real merit, the author did not think very much of it, but it soon began to attract wide attention from all classes of readers, young and old. It was printed in book form in 1870, and at once had a large sale. The book was then reprinted in England, and soon after translated into French, then into German, and subsequently into the Swedish and Norwegian languages. 85,000 copies have been sold in America alone, and very many thousands in England and on the continent of Europe, and in all the British colonies. The present very cheap edition has been made, that the book may be within the reach of all classes of readers. It is a story, in diary form, of the temptations, trials, perplexities of the young girl, wife, mother, neighbour, Christian, and shows how improvement in the divine life may be extracted from all even until perfect peace reigns in the heart. It is exceedingly lifelike, and there is much of pathos, with an occasional touch of quiet humour. It is not a book of doctrinal discussion, nor yet directly of Christian experience, and yet it is one in which the reader is sure to learn much of both.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT STUDENT. (New York: C. Venton Patterson Publishing Co.)—An excellent portrait of Professor Green of Princeton Theological Seminary greets the eye of the reader of *The Old and New Testament Student* for July. This new journal, with its sixty-four pages crowded with material on the Bible, is the successor of *The Old Testament Student*. The first number contains some new features calling for special mention. The portrait of Professor Green with an accompanying biographical sketch by Dr. McCurdy, an old friend and pupil, is attractive. The article on Expository Preaching contains a review and criticism of Dr. MacLaren's exposition of Philemon, bringing out briefly and forcibly some essential elements of expository preaching. An important article is the Soteriology of the Talmud by Prof. Stevens of Yale, which throws light by way of contrast, on the New Testament. From Mr. Pinches, of the British Museum, an interesting letter is printed. The first of a series of articles on the Inter-Biblical Period by Prof. Beecher, and the editor; inductive Studies on First Samuel, covering the Sunday-school lessons, are of great helpfulness to pastors, Sunday-school teachers and all devout Bible students. The synopses of recent articles and the notices of new books, together with an ample bibliography of recent Old and New Testament literature, complete this number. The current issue is the first of Volume IX, and is increased in size from forty to sixty-four pages of reading matter.

A FAMILY, or three or four friends, can be accommodated during July and August, with board and lodging on very moderate terms, in cool quarters on Lake Simcoe. Address and further particulars on application to the office of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, 5 Jordan Street, Toronto.