

of our social, civil and political machinery by which we enjoy so much freedom, quiet and order, should stimulate our gratitude and thanksgiving. That we should pass so safely through such a political change as we have just passed through in the choice of our own rulers in circumstances of peculiar difficulty, and not only so little irritation left behind, but threatening sources of danger also left behind cannot but fill every patriotic heart with thankfulness. Contrasted with the agony of struggle and anxiety which we have just seen among our neighbors to the south in like circumstances, and compared with what we see in other countries, we cannot but feel that our social, civil and political conditions are not inferior, to say the least, to the best in any land. Cognate to this, we cannot but notice as a reason for national thanksgiving the fact that, a danger of the most serious kind with which we were threatened through our connection with the mother country, to the extent even of war with a sister nation, not only has happily passed away, but has been removed in such a manner as to make very remote the possibility of the recurrence of the danger of a fratricidal war.

Rising to still higher grounds of thanksgiving, to those which touch the highest life, what privileges we enjoy, and despite of much which all good men would wish to see improved, where is there a people more favored than we are? The state of public morals and the conditions favorable to their improvement, education, secular and religious, the fullest liberty of worship, the respect for things sacred and divine which prevails, the honor shown to God's house, and day, and worship, are all marks of special Divine favor to our land and people, and should especially fill our hearts with thanksgiving and tune our voices to praise Him from whom all blessings come, and with regard to which He has made us to differ from so many other nations. The fact that in these things we enjoy so many and great blessings, and that they are the source of all that is best in the individual and the nation, should teach us to cherish and hold them fast, that by means of them we may both retain what we have and rise to yet higher things. The great principles of the Divine government have been always the same for nations as well as for individuals, and it is only as we hold fast, cherish and follow the laws and teachings of God's Word that we can hope to retain the national blessings which we now enjoy, and by retaining and fostering them as successive years and generations come and go, hope to have still fresh and ever-increasing reason as this day returns for devout and hearty thanksgiving to Almighty God in our families, civic communities and as a nation.

### THE "HOME STUDY" S. S. LESSON HELPS.

WE have received a parcel of samples of the Sabbath School Lesson Helps published by the General Assembly's S. S. Committee, and edited by the convener, and wish to commend them very heartily to our schools. In intrinsic excellence they are quite up to the mark, and in their educational plan very original and effective. The *Teacher's Monthly* has been enlarged to thirty-two pages, and a coloured map has been inserted, making it now one of the fullest lesson commentaries published in monthly form. The first three pages are devoted to paragraphs and articles of interest and value to the teacher; the next twenty-two pages contain the matter pertaining to the lessons of the month; then follow five pages, edited by Mr. Geo. H. Archibald, one of the rising men amongst primary workers, and the energetic secretary of the Quebec S. S. Union, in which the lessons are treated from the standpoint of the Infant-class teacher. Each lesson is illustrated by a woodcut of a blackboard with a simple, yet very vivid, representation of the central truth. Almost any one can reproduce these before the class. The last two pages are devoted to the department of Teacher Training, which has been ably conducted during the past year by Prof. Ross, of Montreal. The method followed in the explanation of the lessons is most thorough and practical. About five pages are devoted to each lesson. The "Expository Notes" place the teacher in possession of the cream of the best commentaries, enriched with copious carefully selected Bible references. No difficulty is evaded, or smoothed over by pious commonplaces, but when necessary dif-

ferent views are concisely stated, and reasons given for the one preferred, a judicious and independent spirit seems to mark the editor's work here. Then follows "Bible Search-Lights," a phrase happily chosen for a group of questions on each verse, such as an intelligent teacher should ask himself, in order to a full investigation of the points raised, with references to the light thrown upon these by the bible itself. This section should be of great value to those who conduct Bible classes. The "Practical Lessons," which next invite attention, are filled with suggestive thoughts, illustrations, and anecdotes, and, we note with pleasure, not a little poetry, all tastefully selected, while the "Added Points" gather up the fragments of truth, that the teacher may lose nothing. The Superintendent's "Blackboard Review" gives just enough and no more; any one who is qualified to manage a Sabbath school can easily use it. We have given a pretty full description of the teacher's magazine, because we would like all our teachers to take it for themselves. It worthily ranks with the best.

The scholars' helps, both *Quarterlies* and *Leaflets*, are published in two editions, (a) without, and (b) with, the text of the lesson. The committee very strongly recommend the first as constraining to the use of the Bible itself in the school, but when, for any reason, the authorities of a school desire it, the same matter is furnished, accompanied, as in the ordinary scholar's leaflet, with the lesson printed in full for each Sabbath. The *Leaflets* are also supplied either cut apart so that they may be distributed every Sabbath, or four folded together, so that a monthly serving out will suffice. The majority of subscribers seem to prefer the weekly form. The teacher should always make it a point to call with the lesson leaf upon an absent scholar. The *Lesson Leaf* contains, besides the usual items, a doctrine to be proved, and questions from the Shorter Catechism. These will always in future be printed in full, for convenience. The portion of the Catechism laid down in the syllabus of Higher Religious Instruction is taken up, so that those who use these helps may be prepared to pass the examination if they wish. The whole Catechism is covered in three years. The "Introductory" section of "Helps in Studying," briefly places the scholar in the right mental attitude for taking up the lesson. The "Lesson Plan" is logical and natural, as a rule, without any of that straining after alliterative effect which hinders rather than helps the memory, and the notes are clear and concise. "Lessons" are added, and "Bible Search-Lights" appear in all the senior helps.

To us it appears that one of the most commendable features of the scholars' helps is the "Questions to be Answered in Writing." These are usually five in number, and sufficient blank space is left for the answer. On one leaflet the advantages of lesson help and question paper are combined. Our committee supply at the price of an ordinary leaflet what some publishers charge five times as much for. Scholars who write faithfully the answers to these questions have given the lessons a very fair amount of study. The *Quarterlies* are similar to the *Leaflets*, and, like them, are published in three grades, senior, intermediate, and primary. The inside of the covers of the *Quarterlies* and *Teacher's Monthly* are occupied with a very convenient "Bible Dictionary."

The *Primary Quarterly* and *Leaflet* merit special mention. They are edited by Mr. Geo. H. Archibald, and the treatment of the lesson is in harmony with the best educational methods. Mr. Archibald and Mrs. Archibald, who is associated with her husband in the preparation of these helps, are graduates of the Springfield School for Christian Workers, and have devoted themselves for years to the special study of child-nature and kindergarten principles. We do not profess to be experts in this line, but these lessons seem to be peculiarly fresh and interesting. They are copiously illustrated by pictures and symbols.

On the whole, we congratulate the Church upon now having a series of S. S. lesson helps of its own, and do not think that it will be creditable to the loyalty and good taste of our schools if they are not almost universally adopted. Samples have been sent to every minister in the Church, and anyone wishing to examine them for himself has only to drop a postal card to that effect to the convener, Rev. T. F. Fotheringham, St. John, N.B., and he will receive a full set by return mail.

## Books and Magazines.

An extended and comprehensive catalogue has been issued by Scribners. It contains the names of their book publications and importations, with detailed remarks respecting each volume. The catalogue may be had upon application to the publishers. [Charles Scribner's Sons, 153 157 Fifth Avenue, New York.]

A daintily printed series of booklets, containing poems of comfort and consolation, have just been issued, their general attractiveness making them well adapted for presentation purposes. The following famous poems are included in the series: "Not Changed but Glorified," "Not Knowing," by Mrs. Brainard; "Resignation," by Longfellow; "Compensation," by Miss Havergal; and "Crossing the Bar," by Tennyson, with "The Pilot," by Henry Alford, the two last named being printed together. [Thomas Whittaker, 2,3 Bible House, New York. Price 20 cents each.]

In "His Brother's Keeper" the Rev. Charles M. Sheldon has produced a striking and interesting volume. The story relates how the perplexities of a great labor trouble led a rich young man to see that his money was not given him for his own individual pleasure and profit alone. There are some strong people in the book, and their characteristics are remarkably well delineated. It is hard to see how any one, after perusing these pages, could any longer take a narrow or selfish view of the great problems of civilization. [Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society, Boston and Chicago. Price \$1.50.]

To the appearance of none of the numerous annuals do we look forward with greater expectancy than to that of "Chatterbox," whose wealth of illustrations, expressly designed for it by the most eminent English artists, attractive in themselves, are used to adorn reading matter not less attractive and interesting. The 400 page volume of this year, with its 200 original illustrations, is fully up to former standards of excellence. "Chatterbox" is not only a most interesting but a very instructive book, and its healthy moral tone has always been acknowledged. Six handsomely colored plates have been added to the present volume. [Estes & Lauriat, Boston. Price—illuminated board covers, \$1.25; handsome cloth, gilt edges, \$1.75.]

Mr. Peter Newell has furnished several unique books for children. The two Topsy Turvy books, in which the illustrations made a set of comic pictures when looked at one way, and an entirely different set when turned upside down are matched in point of novelty by "The Shadow Show." This volume is made up of a number of pictures of strange men and beasts, printed in color. When the pages are held up to the light and looked at from the back they show the most surprising effects in the way of silhouettes. It has the charm of the unexpected, like a magic-lantern show; hence the title. This idea is further carried out by the decoration of the back of the pages, showing groups of curious children agape at the silhouettes that appear only when the light penetrates the leaves. [The Century Company, New York. Price \$1.00.]

Somewhat over twenty years ago Dr. W. H. Withrow, the noted author and traveller, prepared an extensive work on "The Catacombs of Rome," a work which has not yet been superseded as the best volume dealing with this subject on the market. Owing to this continued demand Dr. Withrow wrote a smaller volume, utilizing the data employed in the larger book, but presenting the information glossed over with the allurement of a fascinating tale. This latter effort—"Valeria: the Martyr of the Catacombs"—has now been issued in its fifth edition of three thousand copies. It gives a vivid picture of early Christian trial and triumph in Rome during the last of the Ten Great Persecutions, that under Domitian. It describes the secret worship of the catacombs, the trial and persecution of the Christians, even of those of Caesar's household, and the wife and mother of Caesar himself, the turbulent scenes in market and forum and amphitheatre. It abounds in elements of heroism, pathos and tragedy, and gives a very graphic account of the conflict between Christianity and paganism for the possession of the old Roman World. No better holiday gift-book could be procured, and it will be found of much interest in connection with the Sunday school lessons on the life of St. Paul for the coming year. [William Briggs, Toronto; C. W. Coates, Montreal. Price 75 cents.]

"English Synonyms and Antonyms, with Notes on the Correct Use of Prepositions." By James O. Fernald. This useful volume is evidently an outgrowth from the Standard Dictionary, as Mr. Fernald was the editor of Synonyms, Antonyms, and Prepositions for that work. "The English language is peculiarly rich in synonyms, as, with such a history, it could not fail to be. . . . Scarcely any two of such words, commonly known as synonyms, are identical at once in signification and in use. . . . This work treats within 375 pages more than 7,500 synonyms. It has been the study of the author to give every definition or distinction in the fewest possible words consistent with clearness of statement. . . . The book contains also more than 3,700 antonyms. These are valuable as supplying definition by contrast or negation, one of the most effective methods of defining being in many cases to tell what a thing is not. . . . Young writers will find much help from the indication of the correct use of prepositions, the misuse of which is one of the most common of errors. . . . while their right use gives to style cohesion, firmness and compactness, and is an important aid to perspicuity." These extracts indicate the principal characteristics of a work that must prove most acceptable and useful to the student, teacher, editor, author, merchant and man of business. [Funk & Wagnalls Co., New York.]