

gone through, together with much speculative theorizing before better and healthier feelings prevail in the industrial world.

The departing year has been marked by a large increase of philanthropic and charitable endeavour. Older and less demonstrative schemes of practical benevolence have been well sustained, while the submission of General Booth's plan for dealing in an effective manner with the weak, the destitute and the criminal classes of England has been hailed with a measure of fervour and hope that is surprising. Not that it has escaped adverse criticism and even ridicule. Neither is it certain that it will stand the strain of practical trial. That it has been subjected to keen analysis is by no means to be regretted. It is well that before inception it should be thoroughly examined, and that those who are most competent to pronounce upon its merits or demerits should embrace the opportunity of doing so while there is time to determine the possibilities of a plan that purposes to deal directly with one of the menacing evils of the age. The eagerness with which it has been generally welcomed and the prompt liberality with which it has been supported are in themselves cheering indications that the human heart beats responsively to generous appeals made on behalf of the helpless and the destitute. These things give evidence that a crying evil is beginning to be recognized, and that the path of duty leads in the direction of practical effort for its removal.

While there are evidences of advancement in the matter of material comfort and philanthropic endeavour, are the higher spiritual interests of mankind advancing? Are there indications of genuine spiritual revival visible? Churches are sharing in the general outward prosperity. Fine buildings are being erected. There is a steady increase in the rolls of Church membership. Organizations for enlisting the practical activity of old and young throughout the congregations are being multiplied. The vitalized energy in the support of foreign missions is being nobly sustained. Young men and young women in large numbers are offering for the work of the Gospel in heathen lands, and there is increased activity in efforts to bring the blessings of the Gospel to the careless and indifferent at home. These are all cheering signs. They betoken fervency of spirit and earnest consecration. Behind them there must be an impelling motive, and what impulse so strong as the spirit of Christ in originating and sustaining these self-denying labours in His name? With all this outward activity is there a corresponding advance in personal godliness, less of the animating spirit of the world? Are the graces of the Christian life, the fruits of the Spirit, as plainly visible as they ought to be? Are the great lessons of the Christian faith being translated into the daily lives of those who claim to be the disciples of Jesus so that in reality they are becoming living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men? Be it the prayer and the endeavour of all who are called by His sacred name to enter on the New Year with the resolve that it shall more than ever before be a year of devoted service for the promotion of the divine glory and the good of our fellow-men.

CO-PASTORATES.

PEOPLE are impressed by magnitude. There is exultation in most things that are large. Great cities, great enterprises attract considerable admiration. Christian people are disposed to rejoice over great congregations. There is something inspiring in seeing a large building filled by a great assemblage eagerly listening to the animated discourse a minister, who has a multitude hanging on his words, feels it easy to deliver. All are conscious of the influence that comes from unity of purpose when numbers are massed together. A mass-meeting, whatever its object is always more enthusiastic than a small gathering can possibly be. It would be a mistake to under-rate the advantages possessed by large congregations.

Nor are their disadvantages merely imaginary. The minister in a large congregation can be little else than a preacher; he cannot well be an efficient pastor. To discharge both parts of ministerial duty with anything like efficiency is hardly possible. Assiduity in one implies a measure of neglect in the duties of the other. If the pastor of a large congregation devotes much of his time to the strictly pastoral work of the congregation his preaching will suffer, and it is the pulpit ministrations that usually attract large audiences. Inferior sermons or obvious inequality in pulpit efforts will act as a solvent and people will drop off and seek a church home elsewhere. If, on the other hand, the minister of a large

congregation gives his undivided attention to his pulpit work, it is not possible that he can give much time to pastoral visitation. The necessary calls that sickness, bereavement, and other pressing duties pertaining to the pastoral office make on his time will leave little or no opportunity for any other form of visiting. What, then, is an able and popular minister to do in the circumstances? Is it advisable that he compromise between pulpit and pastoral work, giving each a fair measure of his time and care? It is not likely that much good would result from an attempt of the kind indicated in the division of his labour. It is better that one man should do one thing well rather than two indifferently, and any number badly. Excellence of pulpit ministrations—that is of the kind that will be of benefit to the hearers—requires constant application and earnest study. The idea that he is a clever minister who can shake a sermon out of his coat-sleeve has long since been exploded. The conscientious minister of to-day cannot permit himself to depart from the line laid down by Robert Murray McCheyne "beaten oil, beaten oil for the sanctuary." Reading, study, meditation and prayer are essential ingredients in every good sermon, and these require that the minister be kept as free as possible from all unnecessary intrusion and distraction.

In order that ministerial visitation may be effective and profitable to pastor and people alike it must be pursued with some degree of system and thoroughness. A hasty and perfunctory call is unsatisfactory to both alike. Thoroughly friendly relations have to be established and maintained if the minister would enter fully into the moral and spiritual needs of his flock. That his counsels, advice or admonitions may be profitable and effective he must have the confidence of those to whom he ministers. If visitation is to be anything more than a matter of form in large congregations, more time would need to be spent upon it than any one man can possibly bestow and at the same time attend to the other duties that cannot be neglected. How, then, is the difficulty to be got over? Large congregations as a general thing are to be found only in large centres. Can the eldership be drawn upon to a greater extent for the performance of this necessary work of spiritual oversight? In this direction it is possible that more might be done by elders whose time was in a measure at their own disposal. But in our large cities how few of those well qualified for the office could afford to devote the time necessary for anything like effective visitation? It deserves to be mentioned approvingly that in most congregations there are elders who have a keen sense of the responsibilities imposed on them by their office, whose visits to the afflicted and sorrowing are much appreciated, but it is not possible to overtake systematic and regular visitation of the membership of large congregations by the eldership.

The New York *Independent* calls attention to the fact that the Episcopal Church in that city is making decided and satisfactory progress, and that in this respect it is unequalled by any of the other Protestant denominations. It finds the explanation in the fact that most of the larger congregations in that body have two or three ministers, so that there is an equitable division of pastoral work, and each receives equal and efficient service. The same thing holds good in the Roman Catholic Church, where the parishes are wrought with great care and diligence, each part of the work receiving due attention. Our contemporary specifies the leading Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in New York and Brooklyn, yet in none of them, with the exception of the Reformed Church, is there so much as a dual pastorate. In this may be the explanation of the fact that in New York the Episcopal Churches are leading in aggressiveness and efficiency, while the others are little more than holding their own.

The question with us in Canada is hardly a pressing one. With the exception of two or three of our larger cities, the congregations are not beyond the capacities for work of a single pastor, though there are several where the benefits of a co-pastorate would be appreciable. The tendency—and it is a hopeful one—is to plant new churches in new localities as towns and cities advance. This, it must be confessed, has been too long overlooked, but now it is beginning to be better understood. Toronto and Montreal have recently shown commendable zeal in this respect, and admirable results are already apparent. It may be open to debate whether a compact, efficiently-shepherded congregation of moderate dimensions may not be a more effective instrument for the promotion of vigorous spiritual health and life than one of large dimensions where the family and the individual are lost sight of in the crowd.

Books and Magazines.

FRANK E. HOUSH & Co., Brattleboro, Vt., have published "Words of Life"—a wall roll of thirty-two pages 14 x 21 inches, adorned with a handsome white cover, fastened to an Antique Oak Rod. Each page contains a Bible gem for morning, noon and night, in neat, clear type.

THE *Health Calendar* or Housekeeper's Kitchen Roll for 1891 contains a bill of fare for each day of the year, tells about healthful foods with directions how to prepare them. Diet for the sick. What to do in Emergencies, Antidotes for all kinds of Poisons, etc., etc., making it a valuable aid to any housekeeper, has been issued by Frank E. Housh & Co. Publishers, Brattleboro, Vt.

THE late Frances Ridley Havergal was without doubt the most popular devotional writer of this century. Her works have been translated into almost every European tongue, but it remained for the United States alone to issue this talented lady's work without permission or remuneration. At this late day a new edition is being issued by Fleming H. Revell, Publisher of New York and Chicago, in which the heirs of Miss Havergal are interested and on which they will receive royalty.

It seems strange that Matthew Henry's Commentaries, with all their popularity during the more than seven score years they have been published, have never been issued in this country in any other style than the cumbersome tomes with which Bible students are so familiar. The new edition in six volumes recently published by Fleming H. Revell is a most successful attempt to put this much-prized commentary into easily handled volumes. A not less striking feature is the fact that this has not been done by a reprint in small type; on the contrary the type is larger than in any former edition.

STRENGTHEN THY BRETHREN. Anniversary Sermon preached before the St. Andrew's Benevolent Society, of Hamilton, Ont. By Rev. R. J. Laidlaw, LL.D. (Hamilton: A. Lawson & Co.)—Dr. Laidlaw's able and eloquent St. Andrew's sermon, from the text, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Gen. iv. 9, has been published in neatly printed pamphlet form. It may be added that in the printing, black ink has given place to orthodox Presbyterian blue, and on the neatly-designed cover the Lion and the Thistle are replaced by the Beaver, on a maple-leaf ground—fitly emblematic of the loyalty of Scotchmen to their Canadian home.

THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE. Discourses upon Holy Scripture. By Joseph Parker, D.D. (Toronto: Willard Tract Depository.)—The thirteenth volume of this elaborate work is devoted to the Proverbs. As might be expected from Dr. Parker's pen, the volume is rich, racy and suggestive. He takes up the leading lines of thought in the book and makes them the subject of his vigorous and original exposition. At the close of the volume there is a chapter devoted to "Pagan Proverbs" in which proverbs current both in the East and in the West are racyly commented on. The book is not only worth an honoured place on the library shelf, it merits a careful perusal.

ONE of the most remarkable lists of famous contributors ever brought together in a single number of a magazine will be presented in the January issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, of Philadelphia. The authors in that number will include Henry M. Stanley, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ex-President Hayes, Hon. John Wanamaker, Joseph Jefferson, Hon. Hannibal Hamlin, Madame Albani, James Whitcomb Riley, General Lew Wallace, George W. Childs, Dr. T. De Witt Talmage, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, Robert J. Burdette, Edward Bellamy, Will Carleton, Charles A. Dana, Sarah Orne Jewett, George W. Cable, Julian Hawthorne, Mrs. Lyman Abbott, Mrs. Margaret Bottoms, and nearly twenty others.

MORNING THOUGHTS FOR BUSY DAYS. By G. Bruce, B.A., minister of St. David's Church, St. John, N.B. (St. John, N.B.: J. A. McMillan)—Good books designed to strengthen thoughtful and devout personal piety are always valuable. There is a need for such in these days. Mr. Bruce has done good service in preparing this little but very helpful booklet. There are brief meditations on over forty passages of Scripture, expressed in clear and direct language. These meditations have nothing in them of a morbid strain; they are as healthful as they are devout. In his few introductory words the author says: "They have been messages of help and guidance on the mornings of busy days to the one who has filled this little basket with them; and if they serve the same good turn to another, the reason for gathering them will be understood."

THE SONG OF THE EXILE. A Canadian Epic. Visions and Miscellaneous poems. By Wilfrid S. Skeats. (Toronto: Hart & Co.)—The "Song of the Exile" is a Canadian epic in five cantos, and is descriptive of the wanderings of an Englishman in Canada, from Quebec to the Pacific Coast. After briefly reciting the reason of his banishment, the exile apostrophizes his native land as its shores fade in the distance. On reaching Quebec, its foundation by Champlain and capture by Wolfe form the subject of his thought. Passing on, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara, the Prairie, the Rocky Mountains, Victoria, and other places are visited. Historical incidents connected with each place are recalled, the scenery is descanted upon, and the political questions of the day are discussed. The other poems in this handsome little volume are good and spirited, though there is a tinge of melancholy running through some of them.

A. M. MACKAY. Pioneer Missionary of the Church Missionary Society to Uganda. By His Sister. With Portrait and Map. Author's edition. (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son; Toronto: The Presbyterian News Co.)—Of Mackay, of Uganda, whose interesting life-story, chiefly from his own letters, is told in this excellent volume, H. M. Stanley says: "He has no time to fret and groan and weep, and God knows if ever man had reason to think of 'graves and worms and oblivion,' and to be doleful and lonely and sad, Mackay had, when, after murdering his bishop and burning his pupils, and strangling his converts, and clubbing to death his dark friends, Mwangi turned his eye of death on him. And yet the little man met it with calm, blue eyes that never winked. To see one man of this kind working day after day for twelve years, bravely and without a syllable of complaint or a moan, among the 'wilderness,' and to hear him lead his little flock to show forth God's loving-kindness in the morning and His faithfulness every night, is worth going a long journey for the moral courage and contentment that one derives from it."