

old one of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; they ask for bread and they get a stone—more than one, several of them.

And then what shall be said as to long vacancies where a congregation cannot make up what is called "their minds," and for months, yea, even for years, they sit as a jury from Sabbath to Sabbath to hear men "preach for calls," instead of worshipping and being built up in righteousness and true holiness, and becoming more and more sanctified. Our good Methodist brethren have a system different from ours which, they say, has brought them a rich fruition and an abundant success. But it is remarkable that just about the time when our Presbyterian brother was preaching his sermon about Amasa and Joab, and right in that very Western Canadian town, our Methodist brethren were enjoying the rich treat of one congregation with two ministers, one sent by the Conference and the other the choice of the people, and they were struggling to hold two prayer meetings in one room, and while one party was mightily moved by the Holy Spirit to offer up prayer the other party was as mightily moved by the Holy Spirit to engage in the exercise of praise with their very loudest voice. So let us hasten slowly and without changing see if our system can be improved to do church work more effectively. Already comes not faintly the jar of a wheel out of order in our polity, says the Moderator of the Synod of the Maritime Provinces. "The day for long pastorates is evidently over. The church should strive to solve the problems connected with pastoral changes."

Do we as Presbyterians teach or preach sufficiently on the distinctive doctrines and polity of our church? I would confidently submit that we do not. I fear that compendium of theology *par excellence*—our Shorter Catechism—is not sufficiently taught in our Sunday schools notwithstanding the splendid effort made by our High Religious Instruction Scheme. Our people are not sufficiently taught why we are Elder-governed Presbyterians and not Bishop-governed Episcopalians; why we are Calvinists and Presbyterians and not Arminians and Methodists; why we are Pædo-Baptists and Presbyterians and not Baptists; why we have open communion, and say it is the Lord's table and not close communion, and say it is the denominational table. I do not stand here to argue for an overbearing denominationalism, but if there must be *isms*, then I argue for Presbyterianism, and especially for an intelligent Presbyterianism. I firmly believe the better Presbyterian I am the better Christian I am. We all know that the cardinal doctrines of the soul's immortality, the fatherhood of God, the Trinity, the redemption, salvation by grace, Christ crucified and risen again, and the other scripture that make a rich cluster of sparkling truth jewels illuminating the dark void of merely human religious thought, should form the warp and the woof of pulpit effort, but I plead for some threads of that teaching that shows us why we believe the Bible as interpreted not only by Luther, but also by Calvin and Knox, and thus make the pattern of our teaching a complete one. Thus we can do more effective church work.

This is the age of electricity in physical science and this is the age of Young People in Church Work. The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour is here, it has arrived, it has come not to visit but to stay. We cannot ignore it, if we do it will ignore us. What will we do with it? Tell it to mind its own business and leave us to mind ours. Tell it that it is an overgrown child and knows not what it does? Tell it that it is of alien blood and not Presbyterian and that Mother Church will not let it repose on her bosom, will in fact have none of it? Nay indeed; a thousand times nay! Like the infant Hercules in his cradle it has already grasped the viper brood of evil principles and stifled them; it has already, though but a stripling, drawn the Ulysses bow and wielded the Douglas brand. Let us enlarge our habitation and stretch out the curtain of our tent and adopt it.

The Y. P. S. C. E. say to us as Sessions in these most loving words of which history bears record, "Intreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I

die and there will I be buried. The Lord do go unto me and more also if aught but death part thee and me." I never had any trouble about the relation in my own congregation. It is as much a part of our church work and life as the Sabbath school is. The Sabbath school has its inter-denominational conventions in the counties, in the Provinces and in the nations and so has the Endeavour Society. The Sabbath school owes and performs its allegiance to the Kirk Session: so does the Endeavour Society. Whoever heard of a minister or session croaking and uttering words of dire foreboding as to the Sabbath school not being in contact with the church and doing independent work and divergent from the church. When I see Pastor or Presbyter shaking their Presbyterian heads sideways over the Christian Endeavour Society and like a Greek chorus singing dirges I bethink me that their Endeavour Society must be stronger than that Session and that the pastor and elders are like swans who are fabled to sing before they die. Make yourselves part of your Young People's Society and you will do more effective Church work. Remember that presbyter is not "Priest writ large" although Milton once in an angry moment said so.

Are the relations of session and managers always pacific. They have separate jurisdictions. Are they clearly drawn and are they clearly understood? If they are not it will surely cripple and mayhaps kill effective church work. The Session finds it necessary to spend money on matters relating to the spiritual interests of the congregation and sends the account to the managers. I have known this to provoke criticism and create misunderstandings. This would not arise in a Deacons' Court but the establishment of a Deacons' Court is not the rule but rather the exception amongst our congregations. I know a plan adopted by one of the city congregations which obviates or rather prevents the occurrence of this difficulty and it is this:—One-fourth of the Board of Managers are members of Session and elected by them to sit with the managers and thus a link is forged which makes the chain complete and where the Session acts on some quasi-temporal matter the managers understand all about it and the risk of any difficulties which sometimes arise among the very best men is thus minimized.

(Concluded in next Issue.)

#### THE HOME MISSION FUND.

Sir,—Will you allow me a few words about the necessity of supporting adequately the Home Mission Fund this year. The crop of 1893, in Western Canada, fell much below the estimate, and the price was the lowest ever recorded. The average yield per acre in Manitoba was below 16 bushels, and in the Territories less still, while No. 1 hard sold for 40 or even 38 cts. per bushel for a time. Deduct the cost of the threshing, binding twine, marketing, etc., and the farmer's margin is either wiped out or scarcely visible. And to aggregate the situation, owing to the scheduling of our cattle in Britain, prices fell with a thud. Almost the sole industry of the west is farming, and when this member of the community suffers all the members suffer with it. The small cash value of the crop has caused severe stringency, and when implement men, merchants and the rest are trying to collect debts, the farmer must satisfy the creditor who is backed by the sheriff. However willing to implement promises made to Presbyteries and missionaries in spring, very many of our people consequently will find themselves unable to do so, and we look for a considerable shrinkage in the part of the salary promised for 1893. Recent visits to different parts of the field clearly show this. Where drought or hail destroyed the crop, the people can do nothing to speak of, and the Home Mission Committee will be called on to help its missionaries in such a crisis. If the state of the Fund permits, well, but if not, irreparable mischief will be done.

To-day a letter was received from a missionary who has seven children, and he informed me that he would have to depend almost altogether on the grant, and asked whether the committee could not advance him

now what would be coming to him till the end of 1894. This of course is impossible. Another wrote saying, that he was in good health himself, but that his wife was ill, that the people could do nothing for him this year, and that he and his family were badly in need of clothing, but unable to purchase any. Another wrote within two weeks, asking whether he could not be changed to some other field, as his people, though much attached to him, were unable to make ends meet for themselves and could not do much to carry his family through the winter. These are but samples. Where men are unmarried they say nothing, they are quite prepared to suffer with their people, if need be, but where families are depending on them it is quite different. All these men are hopeful, and think next year will right many things, but they must be helped in the present distress. But if, when the Home Mission Committee meet in March, a large deficit is staring them in the face, however willing the committee may be and however urgent the case brought before them, they must steel their hearts against all appeals for relief. I fear that the hardships of the frontier missionary are but imperfectly understood, and hence the inadequate support received for the Home Mission Fund. Does any one ask, why are married missionaries sent to such places? Often because others will not go or stay if they are sent. When the married missionary reaches his field by the help of the committee, he realizes that he cannot get away, his family pickets him there. He then goes resolutely to work and frequently does rare service. Does any one suggest retiring from some of the fields now occupied? It cannot and must not be done. In Home Mission work, the Presbyterian Church should know no such word as retreat. We are not now occupying all the fields open and asking for men. Where districts have been neglected they have suffered morally and spiritually and we must never let any one think that our aim is not to occupy and keep occupied every part of the country that God has given us. Let it also be born in mind that the work is extending. Last spring twenty-one new fields were occupied, and hence the appropriations for 1893 must be considerably in advance of those of 1892 to meet ordinary demands. When the facts are known, the church will not fail to respond and hence this statement is now made. The statement could be made longer and stronger but I forbear.

J. ROBERTSON.

544 Church St., Toronto, Dec. 27th, 1893.

#### SEVEN TANGIBLE REASONS.

The North American Life Insurance Company presents to the insuring public the following claims for support.

1. It is a home company with full deposit with the Government.
2. It offers security not exceeded by that of any other company.
3. It is noted for prompt payment of all just and approved claims upon maturity and satisfactory proof of death.
4. It shows a surplus of \$440,264.11 on policy-holders' account over and above reserve and death losses; and has assets, including an uncalled Guarantee Fund of \$240,000, amounting to \$1,282,440.11, for the security of policy-holders.
5. Every holder of a policy for \$5,000 is entitled to act as a director of the company, on election by a majority of votes of duly qualified members, and to vote at all meetings, and every policy-holder for \$1,000 or over is entitled to one vote for each \$1,000 of his policy, at all meetings, whether annual or general.
6. Its policies are printed in clear, large type, in plain, simple language, and are as liberal in their conditions as it is possible to have them, consistent with safety and equity to the policy-holders generally. Observe the following points, viz:
  - (a) The policies are indisputable after three years from the date of issue, securing a reliable provision for one's dependents and not a lawsuit.
  - (b) Travel in any part of the world will not invalidate the policy.
  - (c) Surrender values are allowed after the policy has been in force three years, either by paid up policies or in cash; loans are made on ordinary policies after they have been in force three years.
  - (d) The age of the insured will be admitted at any time by the company on reasonable proof, but, if not so admitted, any error in the age will not invalidate the policy.
  - (e) Its premium income for last year exceeded that of any other Canadian company during the same year of its existence.

## Christian Endeavor.

### BEGINNINGS (A SPECIAL PRAYER SERVICE).

BY REV. W. S. M'AVINCH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.  
Jan. 7th—John 1: 1-17.

How natural for children to wish to know all about the beginning of things! How eagerly they ask questions regarding those objects which are new and strange to them! Men, who are but children of a larger growth, have the same curiosity. Like children they ask, How did this come? Where did it come from? Why did it come? In every age this spirit of inquiry has manifested itself. Among the earliest writings which have come down to us are those of the Greek philosophers. But as those men were without the light which shines from God's Word, we are not surprised to learn that they speculated as to how the universe was formed, why it was so formed and what elements composed it. They tried to trace things to their origin. Men to-day have the same spirit of inquiry. Does a new disease make its appearance? Then men experiment till they find out the nature and habits of its germ. Is there a river whose source is unknown? Then some Livingstone or Stanley is ready to brave the dangers of the wilds in order that he may discover it.

God, who created man, knew that he possessed this desire to trace things to their origin, hence in so far as it was necessary to satisfy this inquisitiveness, He satisfied it. Thus in the Bible we have mention made of the beginning of the world, the beginning of the human race, the beginning of sin in the world, the beginning of punishment, the beginning of redemption, the beginning of the arts and science, the beginning of different languages, the beginning of races and the beginning of the church. Here we have a number of fruitful and interesting themes, and if we desire to find satisfactory information upon any of them, all we have to do is to turn to the inspired writings of the Bible. The writings of devout scientists and historians may shed much valuable light upon these subjects, but the Bible itself must be regarded as our greatest and highest authority.

But as this is the first subject to be discussed this year, and as it is to be taken up at a special prayer service, it is quite possible that it was designed to direct our attention to the opening of the year, the beginning of new duties and the assuming of new responsibilities. If this be the case, let us resolve to begin the year well. The year is well begun if we enter upon it realizing our dependence upon God, our need of His almighty help, His loving protection and His infallible guidance. Let us begin the year by consecrating ourselves afresh to the service of our Master; by dedicating ourselves to Him with renewed energy and zeal, and by resolving that we shall do something to make the lives of others happier and better. Solomon says "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." Doubtless; but then the beginning will largely determine what the end shall be. Even if we fail to accomplish some of the things we attempt we shall be all the better for having put forth the effort. The disciples saw for only a very limited time the glorious vision on the Mount of Transfiguration, but all through their lives they were stronger and better for having witnessed it.

Let us begin the year humbly. Let there be no boasting about what we expect to accomplish. We still require the wise caution of James and Solomon. (Prov. 27: 1; James 4: 13). The warning of Ahab to Bendadad is still worthy of consideration (I Kings 20, 11).

But while we should be humble we should also be hopeful. We have been blessed in the past, and there is no reason to fear we shall not be in the future. God ever abideth faithful.

It is said that what is well begun is half done. Nothing is well begun unless it is committed to God in prayer. "Commit thy way unto the Lord and thy thoughts shall be established."

Spurgeon: "If you are much with God in private, He will be much with you in public."