

found that the conduct of public worship was shared by a band of twelve "lay" brethren, each of whom has in turn his Sunday for the office. He announced two or three of the hymns, read the Scriptures, and gives such "notices" as may be necessary. The plan is well worthy of imitation in our churches, not only as helpful to the pastor and profitable to the congregation, but also as a protest against the priestism which is so likely to be associated with the restriction of the work to one man. But why not extend it to one of the prayers? And may not more than one friend thus take a part in the service? Especially do we lay stress upon a deacon or competent member of the church offering prayer or giving an address at the Lord's Supper. Our churches are not yet free from the unworthy notion that an ordained minister is needed rightly to preside at the sacred feast. —*Rev. W. F. Clarkson in Cong. Magazine.*

**ANNOTATED SCRIPTURES.**—Our forefathers used to have their annotated Scriptures; and it is just possible that the great Bible Societies, in pursuing the only course that seemed open to them, if they would command the co-operation of all Christians—that of issuing them without note or comment, have obscured our minds as to the great benefits found in plain and brief notes on the text. All of us are continually "annotating" the Scriptures for ourselves; and when those are obliged to do this mental work whose knowledge is small, and their judgment less, much of the word is understood very imperfectly. And a wrong apprehension of a passage may stick in the mind, undiscovered and unquestioned, for years and years. Of course, while the text "goes on forever," in its substantial entity, notes must be necessarily made anew every few years. Matthew Henry and Adam Clark could not give us the clue to the apparent discrepancies in the history of Belshazzar; nor could they tell us how it was when God's "people went down aforetime into Egypt, the Assyrian oppressed them without cause." But modern research gives us the necessary clues. And as knowledge is still being piled up, notes, a few years hence, must needs be an improvement on notes of to-day. But as we cannot wait for some possible capstone and completing of knowledge, we have to make use of the best wisdom we have, and keep still watching for more.

While bibles with short annotations have too much dropped out of existence in English, a great need of them has been felt in many foreign lands. Notably has this been the case in China. The missionaries there have been long importuning the great Bible Societies, to issue portions (single books) of the Bible with notes, for China, whatever might be their practice in other countries. Now these have been slow to move. When the great agitation for cheap bibles was carried on by Dr. John Campbell for years, with sledge-like blows, (and he conquered at last!) the B. and F. Bible Society never lifted a finger. Griffith John and the rest of the China missionaries have not been able to get them to move; and their local and native "Tract Society" was taking up the work, when the National Bible Society of Scotland, a few weeks ago, came to the rescue.

We should be glad to see the Congregational Union of England and Wales do for us what the "National Bible Society" is doing for China; give us the New Testament with Notes; something like the useful, but now out-of-date issue of the American Tract Society forty years ago. It would be purchased and read with avidity.

## Editorial Articles.

### PREACHERS.

We have not said "lay preachers," for we don't like the word: the *laos* are the people—which includes the preachers; and the *kleros* are the heritage of God—the whole membership. But we want to speak of preachers who are not ministers by profession; more specifically of the lack of them. Both in Britain and in Canada there has been a drifting of population from the "country" to the towns. Churches ordered after the New Testament polity—called for want of a better name, "Congregational churches"—have been left with depleted membership, and are unable longer to support a pastor. A system of grouping becomes necessary. Three weakened churches unitedly support a pastor, where formerly were three pastors. But this one pastor cannot get round his charges twice on every Sabbath day; and yet the people want two services. If he is a wise man, he has learned the way of saying "yes,"