

They objected on the ground that they did not believe in pledges, and were unwilling to make a promise which would be binding for so long a time. All of my arguments with them were in vain, and they persistently refused to join the society. But about a year afterwards I had evidence that the lady, at least, had overcome her anti-pledge spirit sufficiently to make a promise of a very solemn import to the young man. In fact, they both appeared at my door one day, and blushing asked if I would not impose upon them the most solemn and lasting pledge which a man and a woman can make to each other. They wanted to be married. When they stood up before me, and I said to the young man, "Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife? will you love her, honor her, comfort and keep her in sickness and in health, and cleave you only unto her as long as you both shall live?" a tender glow came into the man's honest eyes, a great purpose seemed to thrill his soul and he said in a voice which had in it none of the anti-pledge spirit, "I will." When I turned to the lady with a similar question, she said, "I will," so promptly and clearly that my wife heard her in the next room. For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, these two young people had gladly taken upon themselves a lifelong vow. They never thought of it as an inconvenience. Love made it the welcome expression of a blessed obligation. Love would make it a privilege and a joy to keep their vow. Love would make them repudiate as an insult any suggestion of violating it.

This is true of the Christian Endeavorer. His love for his Lord makes it easy for him to acknowledge in a public way his determination to engage in active Christian service, to be in evidence at the prayer meeting and other places where his personality and testimony will count for his Saviour, and to do whatever in the good providence of God he finds to do at the golden gateway of Christian Endeavor. The obligations which meet him at this gateway have been made so clear and conspicuous by the experience and results of the past fifteen years that few young people, who have watched the progress and spiritual power of the Christian Endeavor movement, can fail to hear the voice of conscience saying, Here is my great opportunity to stand pledged before the world for Christ and the church.

Boston, Mass.

Looks into Books.

PROCEEDINGS of the Sixth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System held at Glasgow, 1890. London, James Nisbet & Co., Toronto, Wm. Tyrrell & Co.

This volume is edited by the Secretary of the Alliance, Dr. G. D. Mathews, and is the official report of the Council. It gives not only the minutes but also the reports presented on a variety of subjects, the papers read and the discussion that took place. It therefore furnishes a valuable repertory of information as to Presbyterianism throughout the world, and a fair idea of the currents of thought prevailing in its widely scattered sections. A glance through the volume, however, justifies the criticism which found voice in various quarters that far too much time is taken at these meetings with rather common-place papers which nobody much cares to hear, and far too little with open discussion of the subjects which they suggest. No doubt this arrangement prevents many foolish things from being said, but it also robs the meetings of much of the legitimate interest which otherwise might attach to them. The value of these Councils must not be estimated by the amount of work they do, for they do little that could not be as well done without them, but by the sentiment they create, the outlook they afford over a wider field, and the lift that is given to small struggling churches by the sense of fellowship with larger bodies. The volume is gotten up in a style worthy the importance of the body it represents and should be in the possession of everyone who desires to know something of the great Presbyterian world.

THE CHRISTMAS LESSON COMMENTARY for 1897 by W. W. Dowling cloth 8 vo 407 pages. St. Louis Mo. Christian Pub. Co., Price \$1.00.

The annual issue of this valuable aid to Bible study has become a standard and indispensable book. Prepared with scholarship, ability and excellent method, this book furnishes abundant material for the careful study of the weekly Sunday-school Lesson. The following extract from the Preface will demonstrate its completeness. In the gathering of exegetical, illustrative and applicatory material, the best sources available have been drawn upon, and laid under liberal contribution. The most prolific of them have been the former volumes of this Commentary, prepared by the beloved teacher and commentator

B. W. Johnson, of sainted memory. Free extracts have likewise been made from the Commentary on Acts by Dr. Lyman Abbott, and from Notes on the New Testament by Albert Barnes. Many gems of thought and apt illustrations have also been gleaned from Illustrative Notes by Dr. J. L. Horibut and R. R. Doherty, as well as from the works of Poloubet, Miller, Pentecost, Trumbull, Beecher, Gray, Hackett, Plumtree, Wythe, Schaff, Arnot and others, all of which it has been the aim to duly credit in the proper places.

FOUR BIBLE STUDIES, by John H. Osborne. New York, A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1890.

This little volume contains four careful expositions of Scripture passages. Three of them are of parables which the author thinks have not hitherto received adequate treatment, namely, those of the unjust steward, the unjust judge and the importunate neighbor. The fourth relates to Elijah's prayers as kindred to the theme of two of the parables. The main contention of the book is that God often answers prayers even though the petitions are foolish and offered in an unworthy spirit in order to teach His people needed lessons. Some of the exegesis, however, seem a little strained. His principle that a parable cannot be used to teach a lesson by contrast but only by likeness, is undoubtedly erroneous. In fact, the author himself sets it aside before he is done, for he makes the parable of the unfaithful steward enforce the lesson of fidelity. The book is beautifully printed.

ARMENIAN RELIEF REPORT. In response to a universal demand, the Red Cross has published this Special Illustrated Edition of the Armenian Relief Report, of one hundred and forty-three pages, copies of which may be obtained, postage paid, by addressing and forwarding thirty cents to The American National Red Cross, Washington, D. C.

The returns from this edition, less cost of publication, will be used for the farther relief of the Armenian sufferers.

In justice to the Armenian Relief Committees, it is eminently proper to emphasize the fact that all business relations between them and the Red Cross naturally closed on our return home. This fund is, therefore, entirely independent, and will go direct from the Red Cross to the needs of the field so well known to it.

The *Mid-Continent* of St. Louis announces in the last issue its consolidation with the *Herald and Presbyterian* of Cincinnati. The name "St. Louis" will appear on the title-page date line of the consolidated paper, and the business office of the *Mid-Continent* will be continued as the "St. Louis Office" of the *Herald and Presbyterian* in St. Louis. Dr. Williams, for five years past the editor of the *Mid-Continent*, now becomes a member of the editorial staff of the *Herald and Presbyterian*, with office as above. The *Mid-Continent* was one of our most valued exchanges, and whatever its genial and able editor gave expression to was perused with pleasure.

PEOPLE'S COMMENTARY ON THE ACTS, by Rev. Edwin W. Rice, D.D. Philadelphia, The American Sunday School Union. \$1.25.

This Commentary on the Acts, by Edwin W. Rice, D.D., is not intended primarily as a lesson help, but is most timely in its appearance, and will be a valuable aid. Dr. Rice has given proof of great ability in putting the results of scholarship in popular and practical form in his commentaries on Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which are all of uniform style with this present volume. The printing of both versions at the foot of the page, the topical divisions, and the suggestive applications are useful features, while outwardly the book matches well the fine character of the contents. It contains 352 pages followed by 20 pages of Appendix matter. It is profusely illustrated and has two finely colored maps.

CHANGED WITH THE OPENING YEAR.

Two of our most valued contemporaries have, with the first of January, changed the form of their papers. First the *Outlook* has made a very radical departure by assuming the form of the regular magazine and is now published the same size page as the *Century*, *Harper* or *Scribner's*. The form is very convenient, and will, we think, add to the popularity of the very valuable journal, particularly its monthly issue, which it will be remembered, is handsomely illustrated and in every respect one of the most attractive of American Religious publications. Second *The Presbyterian Banner* of Pittsburgh which has heretofore been published in the large (blanket) form appears on January 6th, in a page slightly larger than *THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW*, with the addition of many new features and departments all enclosed in an attractive cover. We trust that both of these worthy publications will find these changes beneficial to themselves financially,