

and took great pains to keep the subject prominently before his congregations and to have a thorough canvass made for missionary funds, at a period when many larger and stronger congregations were doing little or nothing in these directions. He served the church for some years towards the close of his active ministry on the Foreign Mission Committee.

With his neighbors of all denominations Protestant and Roman Catholic alike, Dr. Fraser stood well. It could not be otherwise; for he was a man of peace and of broad charity. When he left Bond Head to reside in Barrie, the community as a whole, irrespective of denomination, united in a public expression of affection and esteem.

In his various public capacities outside the work of the Church, Dr. Fraser was highly regarded for his diligent and faithful discharge of duty, and his thorough conscientiousness. He was known, too, as a man of wide and accurate information. But it was only in the inner circle of his family and intimate friends that his keen sense of humor and his love of good fellowship were allowed free scope. He was a delightful companion, abounding in anecdote and reminiscence, and the happiest hours of his later years were when his children or old friends or neighbours came to visit him in his quiet home in Barrie.

To these also in his later days he opened his heart, as he had not done before, in reference to the deepest and most sacred things of Christian experience. His trust had always been strong, but now the expression of that trust and hope became frequent and joyous. Within the last few months he had committed to memory the hymn, "My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary," and it was almost constantly on his lips, as he saw the end evidently at hand. Christ Jesus, crucified, risen, enthroned, the great and present Saviour for sinners, was the sum of his theology and the uppermost thought in his mind; and in the faith and hope of Him he departed.

Dr. Fraser was thrice married; in 1834 to Miss Jane Geddie, of Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1844 to Miss Nancy McCurdy, of Onslow, Nova Scotia, and in 1866 to Miss Maria James Nicholas, of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. One daughter predeceased him in 1874. His surviving children are Mr. E. E. Fraser, teacher, Shelburne, Mr. J. D. Fraser, J.P., farmer, Newton Robinson, Mrs. G. H. Robinson, Toronto, Rev. J. B. Fraser, M.A., Annan, Rev. R. D. Fraser, M.A., Bowmanville, Miss Fraser, Barrie, Professor W. H. Fraser, University of Toronto, Professor G. A. H. Fraser, University of Montana, and Miss Emma Fraser, under graduate of the University of Toronto.

## Christian Endeavor.

### TOPIC OF WEEK.

BY REV. W. S. M'TAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE'S

JANUARY 22.—God's Covenant. If thou wilt, then.—Zech. iii. 7; John xv. 7-8.

What is a covenant? Webster says that the word as used in theology expresses the promises of God as revealed in the Scriptures, conditioned on certain terms on the part of man, as obedience, repentance, faith, etc. Though the term "covenant" is a Scriptural one, yet it can be used only by way of accommodation when it refers to a transaction between God and man, because man cannot in any way be regarded as an independent covenanting party. And yet, though man cannot be regarded as an independent party, the Bible frequently represents God as condescending to treat with him as if he were. Thus he entered into covenant with Adam, Noah, Abram and David. This is the representation which is set before us in this topic. The fact is that the C. E. pledge is practically a covenant made between the Endeavorer and his Saviour. The person who takes this pledge practically promises to fulfill the conditions on which this covenant with Joshua, the high priest, was based. It is to be observed that this covenant which is mentioned in Zechariah

was made with Joshua, but as he was regarded as the representative of the Church, the compact was really made with all God's people, and so it suggests the thought that God is willing to make a similar compact with every true believer.

1. The terms of the covenant.—Joshua was to walk in the ways of the Lord. This implies that his will was to be in harmony with God's will, for two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. (Amos 3: 3.) It implies also that he was to be obedient to the divine law. He was to love God and keep His commandments—commandments which are not grievous. (1 John, 5: 3.) A willingness to obey the divine law is the great test of our discipleship. We need not wonder that Luther should have said that he would rather obey than work miracles. Christ is become the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him. The Holy Spirit is given to them that obey God. (Acts 5: 32; Heb. 5: 9.) If the pupil is told to study history but chooses to write instead, the excellence of his writing will not merit the approval of the teacher. Obedience! obedience! how it is insisted upon! Samuel said to Saul, "Hath the Lord as great pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," (1 Sam. 15: 22.) Jesus said, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" And again, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

A second condition was that Joshua was to keep God's charge. He was to be faithful in the discharge of the duties pertaining to the priesthood. He was not, like Nadab and Abihu, to offer strange fire upon the altar, Lev. 10: 1. Neither was he, like Hophni and Phineas, to so act that worshippers would despise the service of God, (1 Sam. 2: 17.) But he was to be earnest and conscientious in the discharge of the duties devolving upon him in his high position. This suggests to us that we are to be faithful in doing our work—faithful to whatever trust is committed to us. We can each sing, "A charge to keep I have."

2. The promises—Joshua was assured that if he were faithful and obedient he would be continued in his office and that he would have a certain measure of success in it. Doubtless he regarded it as a great favour that his name would in future be associated with such names as Aaron, Abiathar, Eleazar and Zadok. Should not we feel honored that we are called to be co-workers with God? Some, however, lightly esteem this honor. They would prefer to have a seat in a municipal council to any office in the Church. Not so thought Moses. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Not so thought the Psalmist. He was willing to be a door-keeper in the temple of God. Not so thought Nehemiah. He gave up a lucrative and honourable position that he might cast in his lot with God's people, Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, magnified his office. How sad Peter would have felt had he not been restored after he had denied his Master! And if we had a true conception of the nature of the Church and the character of her Lord we would be glad to be used in any way in advancing her interests; Dr. Pentecost says, "I can think of nothing more desirable than to be taken into partnership with the Lord in the great work of saving men, and to be honored with distinguished service."

Again, Joshua was promised that he would have places to walk among them that stood by. These words are somewhat difficult to understand, but they seem to imply, at least, that he would have access to the temple, and through it, to God. God would commune with him there, as He had done with Moses from above the mercy-seat. And have we not reason to believe that, if we are obedient to God and faithful in our sphere, we shall have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ? These words apparent-

ly suggest also that Joshua would walk among the angels as his attendants. What an honour! But is it not true that the angels wait upon us now? They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who are heirs of salvation. We can say as General Gordon once did, "The hosts are with me—Mahanaim!"

### THE AGED POOR.

There are few more pathetic sights in a world which is full of pitiable spectacles than that of the aged man who has been defeated in the battle of life and finds himself, as the days of helplessness draw near, cast upon the tender mercies of a world in which he has found more of cruelty—the cruelty of thoughtless selfishness and indifference—than of sympathy or generosity. Even in this western land, where industry for the most part goes hand in hand with opportunity, we meet with such cases almost daily. No keen observer can fail to recognize the symptoms of conscious defeat in the bowed shoulders, the downcast, weary look, the purposeless step, whether the figure be clad in the rough garments of the labourer whose whole life has been one long struggle to keep the wolf from the door, or in the shabbily genteel garb of him who has had higher ambitions and seen, it may be, "better days," and who now realizes perhaps even more keenly than the other that the game is up, and that his remaining days, be they few or many, are to be spent in humiliating, possibly distressful want. And if such instances be all too numerous in this land of room and plenty how must they abound amidst the crowded populations of the old world? Surely it is time our Christian civilization did more than it has hitherto accomplished to make such things rare, if not impossible.

For some time past special attention has been directed to the question of the condition of the aged poor in England, and to the necessity of making some better provision for them than the present poorhouse system affords. Recently Mr. Arthur Acland and Mr. Charles Booth have been engaged in collecting facts and statistics bearing upon the problem. They have published a Preliminary Report which is said to be full of facts which are of the most interesting and instructive kind, bearing on the problem, and which at the same time show the need of a more careful and scientific study both of the condition of this unfortunate class, and of its causes than has yet been had. Among these causes the general impression that there is a constant flow of the young and strong from the country districts to the towns and cities is confirmed by this Report. And here the question suggests itself whether, in consequence of the extraordinary strength in Canada of this tendency towards the towns and cities, and especially towards those across the border, there is not much danger that many of the aged in our own country may be left to suffer similar hardships, in days to come.

Among the proposals for the solution of the difficulty which are under consideration in the Mother Country, that of some form of State provision for old-age pensions is at present attracting most attention. But the objections to any such arrangement, whether on the voluntary principle which Mr. Chamberlain proposes, or on the compulsory plan of Canon Blackley, are so many and cogent that there seems to be small probability of its adoption in England. Some of these objections are, it is true, far from convincing. One writer, for instance, says, "History shows that nations have become strong and continued strong, by leaving the amplest scope to individual energy." But history has no example of a state of things under which there was not destitution and suffering among the aged poor, such as this scientific and Christian era ought to find means of preventing, and such as it will not, we hope, rest until it has found means of preventing in a large measure. As to the historical question, it is quite possible that in no age or nation in the past has the lot of the aged poor, or the poor of any class, been freer from hardship and suffering than in the present, in

Great Britain and her dependencies. Less attention was paid in former times to such matters. The comfort of the masses was of small account. That is probably the real difference. It should be the glory of the present age that it will not tolerate such misery among the masses as has passed almost without observation or comment in less favoured days.

Nevertheless it seems impossible to resist the arguments which go to prove that State pensions in any form would be pauperism under a different name; that they would tend to the deterioration of national character by lessening the spirit of independence and self-help; by taking away the strongest inducements to thrift in the years of vigour; by putting a premium instead of a penalty upon laziness; by taxing the industrious and thrifty for the benefit of the drones and loafers. Nor would it be the least of its attendant evils that it would greatly enlarge the sphere of officialdom, and so add to the number of those non-producers who derive their support directly from the taxes of their fellow-citizens.

But to our thinking the strongest, the crucial objection to any system of old-age pensions is that it would not cure the evil. At the best it would but alleviate its consequences. In fact this is all it would profess or aim to do. Under its operation the numerical proportion of the aged poor would probably increase rather than diminish. Those who had to depend upon the weekly dole would be none the less paupers, though the stigma of public assistance might not burn quite so deeply as that of private, or even of poor-rate charity. This, however, though by no means unimportant, is not just the point we set out to make. That point is that any system of pensions is unscientific because it fails to strike at the root of the evil. It attempts no radical cure. It fails to search out the primary causes of the diseased condition, much less to eradicate them. Those causes are to be found largely, no doubt, in the conditions of modern life which result in an unfair division of the products of labour. There is something wrong at bottom in the system under which it is possible for a few individuals to appropriate millions out of the products of the labour of many workers, whose starvation wages render saving for the needs of old age almost and in many cases utterly impossible. Any system, whether it be co-operation, or profit-sharing, or even State-control of industries, which tends to remove this inequality and to make it easier for the thrifty workman to lay by something weekly for old age or a rainy day, tends in the right direction, that of prevention and cure, rather than of simple counteraction. The cry of "socialism" raised against the pension, or any other system, will in itself have no weight with thoughtful men. It is not the name but the thing which is of importance. Governments are supported and necessary in these days, not so much to keep up armies and navies to fight foreign enemies, as to protect the rights and foster the true interests of good citizens of all classes, especially of those who most need such care and safe-guarding. This refers, of course, only to the industrious and thrifty. The feeble and the unfortunate, the idle and vicious classes would still be with us, the one demanding gratuitous aid, the other the apostolic regime, work or starve.—The Week.

The four Protestant congregations of Thorold, the Baptist Church of England, Methodist and Presbyterian have united in extending an invitation to the Rev. Messrs Crossley and Hunter to hold a series of evangelistic meetings in that town. They entered upon their work on Sabbath 15th Inst with encouraging prospects of a large awakening there to an interest in the things of God.

On the afternoon of the 4th Inst., Rev. J. R. Craigie was inducted as minister of the Hanover and Hampton Presbyterian congregations. The Rev. Perry, of Chesley, preached, Dr. James addressed the minister and Rev. McDuff addressed the people. After the services the ministers and people were invited to the residence of Mr. Robt. Pace to partake of a dinner provided for them.