

to show that Greek and Roman sovereigns, Spartan generals, Roman dictators, lawyers and farmers, Greek shepherds, sailors, merchants, down to the lowest in the scale of civilisation, it seemed, thought right to offer a portion of their increase to the gods; these examples being witnessed to by such authors as Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, Plutarch, Varro, Julius Caesar and Pliny. The lecturer, confining his remarks strictly to secular literature, asked, What then is suggested by the foregoing? When did this almost universal practice begin? and who issued the law for the observance of the tithe? Here are the facts and they have to be accounted for. If it was originally left to every one to give for religious purposes according to his own inclinations as much or as little as he pleased, then how should so many people have hit upon a tenth? Did not the universality of this proportion point to a time when these nations and their ancestors lived together, and so derived the custom from a common source? If, moreover, we allow that sacrifice was of divine origin, was it not reasonable to argue that when certain things were appointed as sacrificially clean and others not so, that the Deity also appointed the quantity or proportion in which such things should be offered, the probability being, in the face of the facts before us, that the proportion so appointed was a tenth?

A RETROSPECT.

A few events of the past year may well be recalled at this season. Some of them stand out as ports in the storm others as warning beacons. The church is deeply interested in the retrospect.

The beginning of the year witnessed instances of signal liberality, manifesting a prevalence of interest in the Foreign Mission Field, with its Indian famine, and in the destitute and persecuted Armenians. These offerings revealed strongly aroused spiritual sympathies, some of the donations being from poor people who gave to the utmost of their means.

The work of the Church has prospered. The ministers have been commendably responsive to the claims of the Schemes, and the people as a matter of course have done well. On this point we agree with a contemporary who says: A pastor who regularly and systematically presents the claims of all the Committees, on one occasion apologized to his congregation for making such constant and persistent appeals to the pockets of his people for money. At the close of the service, one of the richest men in the congregation said to him, "I am sorry you made an apology for the appeals you make in behalf of the good cause of the church. I don't know what we should do if we did not have some one like you to tell us so plainly and earnestly what we ought to do with our money. For my own part I am always glad to hear you when you tell us of some worthy cause and urge upon us the duty of contributing to its support." There has been a marked change in the attitude of many ministers to all the Schemes, and for the better. It is a privilege to plead for support for the church's work, and the more loyalty shown by the ministers towards the various committees, the more liberality will be displayed by the people. A step forward has been taken.

No burning question has drawn the attention of the church from her supreme work of spreading abroad the Good News. The year has been fruitful in congregational up-building, and in equipping the various agencies to that end.

While deaths among the reverend fathers have excited affectionate emotions, young men of great promise have gone forth to labour in the Master's cause, and the church

has been strengthened by accessions to her ministry from sister denominations, so that from within and without she has added to her preaching force in a marked degree. She has been able to extend the sphere of her labour with the extension of enterprising and commercial development, as witness her new stations in British Columbia and her mission to the Yukon, and her messengers of peace are still many, awaiting the material means to enable them to enter into new fields.

From all her colleges come cheering reports of excellent work being done. With the growth of the Church these institutions naturally grow; they have fairly well kept pace with the country, and the year about to close has witnessed no retrograde movement, but, on the contrary a perceptible advance.

The celebrations throughout the Presbyterian World of the 250th anniversary of the Shorter Catechism was worthily shared in by the Presbyterian church in Canada. The large gatherings and the valuable addresses has left an impression for good which will be reflected in future years. The other large conventions in which the Church was interested such as the Young People's, the Sabbath Schools, etc., are allowed to have been successful, viewed from various standpoints.

The success of the Sunday car movement in Toronto last summer is among the regrettable events of the year. By some the churches have been blamed for the result of the popular vote. It may be partly true. It will not be forgotten that the defence of the Lord's Day was nobly undertaken by the churches, *i. e.*, by people connected with the churches and that the churches as a whole gave magnificent aid. This much is at least true; that if nearly all the church members in Toronto had voted against Sunday cars, there would be a quiet Sabbath to-day in Toronto. The lesson of the defeat is unity in every good cause.

DR. CRAFT'S VISIT.

IN the interest of Sabbath Observance Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts Ph.D., the well-known Superintendent of the Reform Bureau, Washington, and the author of several able works on Social Reform, and on the Sabbath, has been invited to lecture at various points in Ontario. He has consented and will spend the interval from January 4th until the 10th as follows: London, Jan. 4th; Paris, 5th, (afternoon); Brantford, 5th; Hamilton, 6th; St. Catharines, 7th; Toronto, 9th, and 10th.

THE MANITOBA SCHOOL LAW.

AT this writing the full text of the Pope's Encyclical on the Manitoba Schools has not been published in Canada and the summaries purporting to give its substance, that have appeared have been made the sport of the party press. The Conservatives see in the deliverance a strong condemnation of the settlement, the Grits, an acquiescence. But while it is impossible to get at the truth from the press despatches, it is interesting to know Mgr. Bruchesi's views on the Encyclical as given by him in an interview at New York on his return from Rome. He says that the Pope commends the Bishops in their fight against neutral or non-sectarian schools in Manitoba. Mgr. Bruchesi then gives a resume of the question: Entire harmony prevailed until the passage of the law of 1893, making the schools non-sectarian, and taxing Protestants and Catholics alike for their support. The Catholics established nearly ninety schools in that time. Last year came the settlement of the question by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who made this compromise:—One half hour in each school day is set apart for religious teaching, and the religion that predominates in each school is the religion taught. This caused the Bishops to protest,