

advent of our Lord is not only not taught in the Confession, but in so far as any utterance is given, the opposite teaching is set forth; Christ's second coming being placed contemporary with the general resurrection and the final judgment. No amount of special pleading can harmonize premillennialism with the position of the Standards. Yet one section of the present united church did appoint to its chair of Systematic Theology a minister who was known to hold those views of Eschatology which in this particular are at variance with the teachings of the Confession, thus setting its seal upon a subscription of large liberty in a matter of detail. The appointment was not made because of those views, but in spite of them, and the church's forbearance in that matter is strongly in contrast with the propagandist spirit of many thus tolerated in the communion. Again, The Confession explicitly states that the Pope is Antichrist, which stamps as Antichristian the Papal Church, and commits itself to thus explaining II Thes. ii. 3-9.

Yet Roman Catholic priests have been accorded status in the Presbyterian Church without baptism or ordination. In other words, the baptism and ordination of Antichrist has been officially accepted if the Confession is to be construed literally. The church in these instances is harder than its creed, to which it has never asked a slavish adherence, while at the same time it seeks to guard as a sacred trust the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

It would appear, therefore, that charges of unfaithfulness to the terms of compact are not to be ruthlessly made, and that the church will from time to time as light and truth break forth, declare either by tolerance or by act, how far in details departure from the text of the Standards may be allowed. And the church may be depended upon in this matter, the virtual liberty given to orderly discussion, and the time necessarily spent as the case—if case there be—goes from court to court are safeguards against precipitancy on either side. Only let individuals be trustful the one towards the other, and patient; neither liberalism nor conservatism will have cause to fear. Only let liberty be used not as an occasion to the flesh but for the serving of each other in love, and the holding fast by the proving of all things, retaining that which is good.

PRESBYTER.

#### A SYNOD MINUTE BOOK OF TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

##### NO. I.

Those who have any general knowledge of the history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are aware that prior to 1840 there were two bodies in Ireland, each represented by a Synod. The strongest and most numerous body had for its Supreme Court the Synod of Ulster, and the representatives of the movement of the Erskines had the Secession Synod. At the date mentioned the two bodies united, and from that time forward the Supreme Court has been known as the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It was only after the present century had begun to run its course that the minutes of the Synod of Ulster were printed, those of earlier dates were until very lately hidden away in the manuscript books in which they were originally transcribed. Of course the records were jealously preserved, by leave of the Church Courts historians such as Reid and Killen and Witherow having free access to them for literary purposes. At the suggestion of the last-named it was arranged a few years ago to have them printed, but so far only one of these volumes has appeared. This volume came into the writer's hands some weeks ago, a present from an Irish friend who passed through Canada on his way from the World's Fair in August last. We propose to tell our readers some things about a volume which is of great interest as well as valuable for historical purposes. The archaic spelling and contractions are retained, but there is no difficulty worth mentioning in reading the volume.

This volume contains the minutes of the years 1691 to 1720 inclusive. There are not

quite thirty meetings recorded, for some two or three years during that time the Synod seems not to have come together. There are some twenty-seven meetings of which the proceedings are given. An attentive and observant reader will find many striking contrasts between the ways of transacting business then as well as in the mode of recording them and our ways and modes of doing things now.

To begin with the roll. Two centuries ago our ancestors contented themselves with a very bold form of making up their roll. The ministers' names were set down in one column in Presbyteries, and the elders who were in attendance, side by side in another column, and that was all. No date of ordination, no name of congregation, no post office. If the reader of the present day wishes to ascertain such interesting items as these he will have to spend some time and have recourse to other sources to find them out. To know the name of a minister and not to know the locality where he lived and labored does not amount to much as we think of it now. The writer has taken the trouble to mark in his copy throughout the congregation opposite the minister's name, and he ventures to say that there are very few in Canada in possession of the materials for performing that task. There is not much of a boast in saying that. Possibly there are not a great many who care whether they have the material or not. Moreover it is very puzzling occasionally to identify the old name of the congregation with the modern name of it. We have come across names here we never heard before in all our reading, but in no case have we failed to find the modern representative of the old charge. In one respect there is evidence of the former days being better than these. That is in the number of elders that attended. For every ten ministers in attendance there were as a rule eight or nine elders. The elders of rural congregations in those days were as faithful in attendance as those from towns and cities.

So far as the ministers were concerned the absentees from meetings of Synod were taken to task with a sharpness that shows the oversight to have been of a real character. We find some exercises that were made accepted and some were not. If there were vacant congregations that the Synod made arrangements for supplying, the absentees as a rule were required to do double duty as compared with those who were in attendance on Synod. That was one way of putting a penalty on the defaulters.

When vacant congregations in important counties were to be filled, the Synod exercised its episcopal authority with a high hand. The personal preferences of the brother called from a country charge to a town or city weighed very little; it was what was thought to be for the good of the church as a whole that determined the issue. There are exceptions to all rules, no matter how iron bound they are. One brother resisted the decree even at the peril of being suspended or deposed and in the end by pure persistency and passive resistance had his way. But that is a very rare instance. If an important congregation called a licentiate, the Synod made strict inquiry as to whether the young man in their opinion was equal to the demands to be made upon him ere the Presbytery of the bounds was allowed to ordain and induct him. The supervision that was exercised at all times was by no means an easy yoke in particular instances, but the result as a whole, so far as one may judge from reading these proceedings, was salutary. It is to be remembered that at that time the Presbyterian Church was under grave disabilities, and these disabilities are ever and anon manifest in the deliberations. The toleration granted to non-established churches was of a very limited kind. There was naturally a good deal of restiveness under the yoke which the Anglican brethren continued to make as galling as possible.

The Parsees in Bombay, "the Jews of India," are influential, public spirited and progressive, says a writer in *World Wide Missions*. They number 50,000—more than half the whole number of Parsees in India, and are descendants of the Persian exiles who twelve hundred years ago were allowed to settle in Gujarat on agreeing to adopt some features of the Hindu religion.

#### WHY SHOULD YOU INSURE YOUR LIFE?

Because in case of your early death, life insurance makes absolute provision for those dependent upon you, enables you to leave an estate that can at once be realized upon, and that cannot be taken from them; secures to your family freedom from privation and those distressing experiences which come to the destitute; provides the means to keep your family together, to educate your children, and prepare them for the responsibilities of life; and to save your property or business perhaps from being sacrificed to meet the demands that come in the process of forced liquidation of an estate by strangers.

Life Assurance gives to a man a consciousness of safety in regard to the interests of his family, which eliminates a large part of the wearying worry and carking care of life, and thus fits him for the free, energetic and successful prosecution of business.

It promotes thrift, cultivates habits of economy, and in the form of an investment policy enables a man, during the producing period of life, to provide a goodly competence for old age.

During your life you surround your family with reasonable comforts and even luxuries.

Are you willing, in the event of your untimely death, that your wife and children should experience a double bereavement in the loss, not only of a husband and father, but also of suitable means of protecting them from the privation, distress and humiliating economies necessitated by poverty?

After perusing the above you should act at once, by communicating with the agents of some responsible life insurance company, and endeavour, if it lies in your power, to place some insurance on your life. A life company that has a record for the prompt payment of death claims and for liberal treatment to its members is the one in which you should insure your life. The North American Life Assurance Company of this city, has justly earned for itself a splendid reputation for the promptness with which it has paid its losses, and for the unexcelled success that has attended its financial operations. To-day the Company has assets of \$1,703,458.39, and a net surplus for its policy-holders of \$297,062.26.

It used to be a jocose remark long ago that officials bound for India used to say good-bye to Sunday at the Cape of Good Hope. It would seem that many members of Evangelical Churches do something of the same kind when they become shipowners or ship captains. It is well known that steamers in the coasting trade have their times of sailing so arranged that they are at sea on Sunday, and those employed on them are thus robbed of spiritual ministrations, if not of bodily rest. This desecration of Sunday seems to be extending. A report from Savona says—"British sailors in an Italian, Spanish, Belgian, Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian vessel—in fact, under any other flag than their own—may be seen enjoying their Day of Rest when they happen to have a Sunday in port; but under the British flag this right, this necessity is denied them. Can it be wondered at that by some we are looked upon as 'a nation of shopkeepers, whose only god is money, and whose gains are thought of far more importance than the souls of men? It is a sore disgrace.'"

#### WESTERN ASSURANCE COMPANY.

At the annual meeting of this Company held last month, its forty-third report was presented. In common with all such Companies doing business, the very exceptional circumstances in a business point of view of last year were referred to. In conformity with a resolution passed a year ago the paid up capital has been increased to \$1,000,000. During the last five years preceding 1893 it paid dividends at the rate of ten per cent., and now out of its ample reserve fund, which it has been the policy of this Company to accumulate during prosperous years, it has been abundantly able to bear the strain of the last unusual year. Large as the losses of last year have been as compared with preceding years the chairman showed in his report that in Canada they have been much less than that of companies doing a similar kind of business in the United States. With a reserve fund of over one million, and assets valued at \$2,412,642, this Company possesses a financial standing which must in the future continue to command for it a liberal share of the best business of the continent. In the report the Company's officers and agents were accorded praise for their management throughout a particularly trying year. Mr. A. M. Smith and Mr. Geo. A. Cox were re-elected president and vice-president respectively for the ensuing year.

When we embark in the dangerous ship called Life, we must not, like Ulysses, be tied to the mast; we must know how to listen to the songs of the sirens and how to brave their blandishments.—*Arsene Houssaye*.

## Christian Endeavor.

### HOW AND WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?

REV. W. S. MCTAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.

April 1.—Matt. 6:5-15

Prayer is a most helpful means of grace. It is one of outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption. It is important, therefore, that we should know how to engage in it.

#### I. How should we pray?

(1) We should pray reverently. We should remember that we are coming into the presence of the great God who searches the hearts of the children of men. Our hearts should be impressed with the thought that God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him (Ps. lxxxix. 7; Heb. xii. 28). Levity is utterly out of place in prayer. We should not be rash to utter anything before God for He is in heaven and we are upon the earth (Eccles. v. 2).

(2) We should present our petitions in the name of Christ. "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). Very frequently did Christ remind His disciples that they must present their prayers to God in His name (John xiv. 13, 14; xv. 16; xvi. 23, 26).

(3) We should pray in faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6). "All things whatsoever we ask in faith, believing, we shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22). According to our faith it shall be done to us (Matt. ix. 29).

(4) We should also pray earnestly, or with importunity. This feature of prayer was emphasized by Christ in the parable of the Friend who came at Midnight, and also in that of the Unjust Judge. How earnest and importunate Jacob was! To the angel who wrestled with him he said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." How importunate Paul was also! Three times he besought the Lord to remove that thorn in the flesh (II. Cor. xii. 7, 9).

(5) While we ask for what we desire we should always be prepared to submit to God's will. He knows what is best for us, whereas we know only what we would like to have, and what is best may be very different things. Let us be satisfied then, that even though we do not receive what we desire, we shall receive something better, and let us be prepared to say, "Let Him do as seemeth Him good."

II. Why should we pray? Many are asking now the question long ago asked by another, "What profit shall we have if we pray unto Him?" The profit is greater every way.

(1) We shall receive many of the things we ask for. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James v. 16, 18). The poet wrote:

"Who can tell but God may let some half-formed purpose wait,  
In answer to a strong united cry?"

But we do not so understand God's plans and purposes. God promised certain blessings to Israel, but he added, "Yet for all this will I be inquired of by the House of Israel to do it for them."

(2) Even if we fail to receive the blessing which we desire, we shall receive something better. So it was with Paul (II. Cor. xii. 7, 9). "They that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good." "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." He may withhold some things—indeed, He may withhold many things, but He will withhold no good thing.

(3) In any case we shall have communion with God, and such fellowship can result only in good to us. Luther was accustomed to advise his friends to be much in communion with God, because he thought that if they were helped by being in the company of great and good men, they would be much more benefited by being much in fellowship with God.

Cumberland Presbyterian: A good way to begin work in a new field is to double the circulation of the church paper.