

Increased membership, more generous contributions, greater efforts in working for the Master, are good signs of spiritual life and growth in grace. These last are the elements of congregational prosperity. Without these, sustained external progress is impossible. With their presence, blessed work can be accomplished. For these and all real good in the Church, there must be humble dependence on the Divine Spirit and true consecration to Him who is head over all things to His Church, and who will yet make Zion a praise in the earth.

THE WEEK OF PRAYER.

OBJECTION to the continuance of the Week of Prayer comes from an unlooked-for quarter. Had those who are hostile or indifferent to living religion sought to belittle or condemn the observance of the Week of Prayer throughout the world it would have occasioned little surprise, but that a grave arraignment should be made by Dr. George F. Pentecost, of all men,—an evangelistic worker endowed with great power and fervency of spirit—is surprising. The main objection he urges is that the services connected with the Week of Prayer have become stiff and formal. That season which for nearly a quarter of a century has been regarded as so precious wherever Christians are to be found has, he thinks, crystallized into formalism, and it would apparently cause him little regret were it forthwith to cease its existence. Formalism is a bad thing, a deadening thing wherever it is found, but the best remedy surely is not to seek the destruction of the institution to which it adheres in order to secure its extermination. The finest ocean steamer may occasionally be retarded by the adhesion of barnacles. Nobody would dream of getting rid of them by the destruction of the vessel. The simpler method would be their removal by the ordinary process of scraping them off.

No institution, however useful it may have been in the past, is entitled to exemption from criticism. If its usefulness is gone, or if that usefulness is impaired, it is a good service to make the facts manifest. Highly as the Week of Prayer has been prized in past years, great and blessed as have been the results following its observance in many lands, if it has now ceased to be a good thing and become hopelessly bad, let it be shown if such be the case. It is certainly not so recognized. The Week of Prayer does not attract the deep interest and attention it did in earlier years. But then it is no longer a novelty. In the religious as in other spheres it cannot be questioned that many people are captivated by what is new and unusual. In itself, however, this would be an unsatisfactory reason for the abolition of the Week of Prayer.

The reasons that have commended this blessed institution are so numerous and influential that it would be difficult to convince Christian communities, all over the earth, that they were doing wrong in meeting with their fellow-Christians of all Evangelical Churches, and uniting in earnest supplication for blessing to the Church and the world. Remembering how the Week of Prayer originated, it would surely be a matter of deep regret and disappointment if the scattered bands of missionary labourers, in all lands, should be forced to say: It was a delightful and cheering thought, bringing into pulse-beat with the communion of saints, the whole household of faith, to know that all Christendom was interceding for blessing on the Master's work in which we are engaged, and for us; but, they say, these meetings are becoming too formal and must be given up; however that may be, it is a serious loss to us. Did no other reason offer than the support the week of concerted prayer has given to the noble army of missionaries, that alone would afford ample ground for its continuance.

Whatever abuses, whatever weaknesses, have entwined themselves around this cherished institution, let them be carefully inquired into, and removed as speedily as possible. Few that have taken an interest, and enjoyed the services in connection with one of the most blessed seasons of the year, and one of the distinctive features of modern Christianity, will think of entertaining a proposal for the abolition of the Week of Prayer.

PROFESSOR LANGLEY, of the Alleghany Observatory, has received two large medals, one of gold and the other of silver, from the Royal Society of London, in recognition of the importance of his discoveries in light and heat.

Books and Magazines.

ROUGH, A CLEVER DOG. A true story of his life. By Mrs. Jarvis. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.) Most children are fond of animals, and dogs are general favourites. The little book contains an interesting dog story, the author of it taking special care to inculcate the lesson of kindness to animals.

THE PASTOR'S DIARY AND CLERICAL RECORD. Prepared by Louis H. Jordan, M.A., B.D. (Montreal: W. Drysdale & Co.)—This most valuable and time-saving manual has reached its third edition. Not being denominational, it is of use to all ministers. No one who has already used it would think of being without it.

MARRIAGE AND HOME LIFE. By T. De Witt Talmage, D.D. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.)—Dr. Talmage's recently published work, "The Marriage Ring," has attained a wide popularity. An evidence of this is the publication under the title that heads this notice, of a very handsome edition of the work by the enterprising firm of Edinburgh publishers.

A MANUAL OF THE ENTIRE GEOGRAPHY OF SCRIPTURE. By Professor H. S. Osborn, LL.D. (Oxford, Ohio: Oxford Map Publishing Co.)—This little manual conveys much information in short compass. There are notices of recent discoveries, and the accepted pronunciation is supplied. There is also a number of clear and distinct maps which will be found helpful to searchers of the Sacred Scriptures.

IN DEFENCE OF THE FAITH. By Alexander Oliver, B.A. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier.)—Mr. Oliver is pastor of Regent Place United Presbyterian Church, Glasgow. He is a close and clear logical reasoner, and is thoroughly conversant with modern apologetics. The present valuable work from his pen is not however scholastic, in the ordinary sense of the term. The substance of it was delivered as a series of lectures, to popular audiences. The lectures were highly appreciated, and have been productive of great good. Thoughtful, young readers, as well as others, will be greatly benefited and delighted with the book.

AN ALGONQUIN MAIDEN. A Romance of the Early Days of Upper Canada. By G. Mercer Adam and A. Ethelwyn Wetherald. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son; Toronto: Williamson & Co.)—There is an impression that Canada and all its belongings are intensely prosaic. The appearance of this well-told tale of the earlier days of settlement is an indication of the rich and comparatively unwrought mine of fiction and romance which Canada possesses. The story of the "Algonquin Maiden" is told with exquisite skill and literary excellence. Character is drawn with a force and freedom that come from keen and discriminative observation. The movement of the book is quiet and undemonstrative, but the interest deepens till the climax is reached in the "Passing of Wanda." The political struggles of the time to which the story relates are narrated with candour, fairness and impartiality. As a whole, the book is a worthy addition to Canadian literature.

THE CHURCH AND THE COMMONWEALTH. Discussions and Orations on the Questions of the Day. By the Rev. William Cochran, D.D. (Brantford: Bradley, Garretson & Co.)—Besides being an earnest and hard-working Christian minister, Dr. Cochran is a warm-hearted, liberal-minded Christian patriot. Every question of public concern affecting the true prosperity of the commonwealth is a matter of deep interest to him. He does not preach nor does he write politics, but he treats public questions in a broad and comprehensive Christian spirit when he feels in duty called upon to give utterance by voice or pen to his convictions. The goodly-sized volume recently issued deals with questions of vital interest to the well-being of our time. The subjects comprised in the first part are "Christian Citizenship," "Capital and Labour," "Popular Amusements," "Sceptical Objections to Prayer," "Marks of a Genuine Revival," "Is the Church of To-Day Apostolic?" "Thanksgiving Memories." The Biographical Discourses are very attractive. They include "Martin Luther," "Thomas Carlyle," "George Brown," "Presidents Lincoln, Garfield and Grant. The other sections of the work treat admirably of "Character and Culture," "Religion and the State" and "Christ's Kingdom—Its Glory and Perpetuity." The book cannot fail to be read with profit and delight. It may be added that the work is adorned with a number of illustrations.

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

MONEY AND THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

God has laid upon Christian nations the work of evangelizing the heathen world. He has laid on us the duty of Christianizing our own heathen, and under such conditions that the obligation presses with an overwhelming urgency. If this duty were accepted by all Christians, the burden would rest lightly upon each, but great multitudes in the Church are shirking all responsibility. So far as the work of missions is concerned, these members of the household of faith are loungers. The unfaithful many throw unnatural burdens on the faithful few. Under these circumstances he who would be faithful must accept sacrifices which would not otherwise be his duty. That is, the principle always and everywhere applicable, that we are under obligations to make the wisest use of every penny, binds him to a use of his means which, if every Christian did his duty, would not be necessary. Notwithstanding all the sacrifices made by some, there are vast multitudes which the established channels of beneficence have placed within our reach, who are starving for the bread of life. As long as this is true, must not high uses of money yield to the highest?

The general acceptance, by the Church, of the Christian principle that every penny is to be used in the way that would best honour God would cause every channel of benevolence to overflow its banks, and occasion a blessed freshet of salvation throughout the world. "But," says some one, "that principle demands daily self-denial." Undoubtedly; and that fact is the Master's seal set to its truth. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."—Luke ix. 23.

One who believes that every dollar belongs to God, and is to be used for him, will not imagine that he has discharged all obligation by "giving a tenth to the Lord." One who talks about the "Lord's tenth" probably thinks about "his own" nine tenths. The question is not what proportion belongs to God. But, having given all to Him, what proportion will best honour Him by being applied to the uses of myself and family, and what proportion will best honour Him by being applied to benevolent uses? Because necessities differ this proportion will differ. One man has a small income and a large family; another has a large income and no family at all. Manifestly the proportion which will best honour God by being applied to benevolence is much larger in the one case than in the other. God, therefore, requires a different proportion to be thus applied in the two cases. If men's needs varied directly as their incomes, it might, perhaps, be practicable and reasonable to fix on some definite proportion as due from all to Christian and benevolent work. But, while men's wants are quite apt to grow with their income, their needs do not. A man whose income is \$500 may have the same needs as his neighbour whose income is \$50,000.

There are multitudes in the land, who, after having given one tenth of their increase, might fare sumptuously every day, gratify every whim, and live with the most lavish expenditure. Would that fulfil the law of Christ, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

There is always a tendency to substitute form for spirit, rules for principles. It is so much easier to conform the conduct to a rule than to make a principle inform the whole life. Moses prescribed rules; Christ inculcated principles—rules for children; principles for men.

The law of tithes was given when the race was in its childhood, and the relations of money to the kingdom of God were radically different from what they are now. The Israelite was not held responsible for the conversion of the world. Money had no such spiritual equivalents then as now; it did not represent the salvation of the heathen. The Jew was required simply to make a provision for his own worship; and its limited demand might appropriately be met by levying upon a certain proportion of his increase. Palestine was His world and His kindred the race; but, under the Christian dispensation, the world is our country, and the race our kindred. The needs of the world to-day are boundless; hence every man's obligation to supply, at need, is the full measure of his ability; not one-tenth, or any other fraction of it. And no one exercises that full measure until he has sacrificed.

By all means let there be system. It is as valuable in giving as in anything else. Proportionate giving to benevolence is both reasonable and scriptural—"as God hath prospered." It is well to fix on some proportion of income, less than which we will not give, and then bring expenses within the limit just laid down. But when this proportion has been given—be it a tenth, or fifth, or half—it does not follow necessarily that duty has been fully done. There can be found in rules no substitute for an honest purpose and a consecrated heart.—*Josiah Strong, D.D.*