

The Religious World

The Blakeslee Sunday-School Lessons

A meeting called by a large number of distinguished pastors and Christian workers of various denominations, and from different parts of the country, for the purpose of extending the Bible Study Union, was held in the Collegiate Reformed Church, Forty-eighth Street and Fifth Avenue, on the afternoon and evening of November 23. As the result of the afternoon meeting, an organization was effected, of which the Rev. D. H. Greer, D.D., rector of St. Bartholomew's Protestant Episcopal Church, New York, is the President. A full list of officers and lesson committee were also chosen. In the evening a public meeting was held, at which the Rev. George H. McGrew, D.D., presided, and which was addressed by the new President, Dr. Greer; Dr. A. H. Bradford, of Montclair; Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer, of Cambridge, and Professor Burnham, of Hamilton, N. Y. All the speakers highly commended the Inductive System of Lessons, and Dr. Greer did not hesitate to say that he considered it by far the best system that had ever come to his knowledge, and the only one that had ever satisfied him. The only objection which he had ever heard made to it was that it made the pupils work. The effect of this new system of Bible lessons is already seen in the lessons of the International Committee for the ensuing year. There is surely room for both series of lessons, and probably each will be better for the competition of the other. Most who have used the Blakeslee Lessons are enthusiastic in their favor. Doubtless it will not be long before still more improvements in the International Lessons will be introduced, and the churches and Sunday-schools will be the gainers.

Death of Professor Pease

Andover Theological Seminary has met with another great loss. Only recently Professor W. J. Tucker resigned the chair of Sacred Rhetoric to accept the presidency of Dartmouth College. The Rev. Theodore C. Pease was chosen as his successor. Mr. Pease was well known in the vicinity of Boston—a man of about forty years of age, a finished scholar, a fine preacher, an earnest, noble, and most lovable man. Only a few weeks ago he was installed in his position. Very soon after he was taken ill, and now we have the sad news of his death. He was peculiarly fitted for the work which he had undertaken, and looked forward to it with great enthusiasm. There was every reason to expect that he would have proved a worthy successor of the eminent men who have occupied that chair in Andover Seminary. But he was not to realize his desire. Cut down in the prime of his powers, he has left behind him a peculiarly fragrant and beautiful memory in the church at Malden which he served so long, and in the churches of New England in which he was so well known. It will not be an easy task to fill his place in Andover Seminary.

Dr. Shields on Reunion

The Rev. Charles W. Shields, D.D., Professor in Princeton College, is a staunch and loyal Presbyterian and an uncompromising Calvinist. He is, however, more than this, being a most enthusiastic believer in organic Church unity. Some time since he prepared a paper on the general subject of "The Reunion of Christendom," with especial reference to the Historic Episcopate. It will be remembered that the Bishops of the American Episcopal Church and of the Anglican Church have united in putting forth suggestions looking toward Church union on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, the Apostles' and Nicene creeds, the two Sacraments, and the Historic Episcopate. There is no difference of opinion concerning the first three of these propositions, consequently Dr. Shields devoted himself chiefly to the last of the four. This paper having come to the knowledge of a company of ministers in New York, a committee, consisting of Drs. W. R. Huntington, of Grace Church, Charles Cuthbert Hall, of the Second Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, George Dana Boardman, of the First Baptist Church, Philadelphia, and Amory H. Bradford, of the First Congregational Church, Montclair, were appointed to arrange for a meeting

in New York at which Dr. Shields's paper should be read. The meeting was held in Hardman Hall on the afternoon of November 23. To the meeting were invited representatives of all denominations, Catholics and Protestants, and all schools of both. The chair was taken by the Hon. Seth Low, President of Columbia College. The paper of Dr. Shields is most interesting, and the ablest contribution to the subject which we have ever heard. He maintains that the Historic Episcopate is something entirely independent of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and would continue if that Church should cease to exist, and that only as the Episcopate is realized is organic Church unity possible. He believes that with it should be combined the independence of the local church, for which Congregationalists contend, the presbyterial organization of the Presbyterians, while above all, and the symbol of world-wide unity and of the continuity of the Church, should be the Episcopate. The meeting in Hardman Hall was prophetic. There are not wanting multitudes of people who tell us that organic unity is impossible; this meeting indicated that, whether possible or not, many are longing for it; and, as Dr. Shields ably showed, it cannot be realized on the basis of doctrine or of ritual, but it may on something more inclusive than either. We hope that he may be invited to read this paper elsewhere. Whether men agree with it or not, they cannot fail to be impressed by its ability and candor.

The Rev. W. C. Bitting has recently read a paper before the Southern New York Baptist Association from which we cull facts that will be interesting and instructive for those who are not familiar with the Baptist churches in New York City. The number is 44, of which 5 are colored. Of the white churches 32 are native, 5 German, 1 Swedish, and 1 Welsh. Thirty-five of the white churches contain 11,383 church members, of the total of 12,448 white church members in 1892; 24 of these 35 churches report 1,429 members living outside the city, or about one-seventh of their roll strength. The total gain in membership of the 39 churches of the Association is 1,319, and the total loss 1,362, making a net loss of 43. "This is the more striking in the light of the fact that the 13 white churches of the Association outside the city had a net increase of 243. It is fair to state that the churches this year (1893) report a gain of 476." A study of the dismissals shows that most of the removals are to suburban churches, which are built up at the expense of the city churches. Members of the suburban churches are not moving toward the city churches, but from one suburban church to another. Further facts are given, the results of which are thus summarized: "The current is away from, not only the down-town churches, but the city as a whole." Twelve churches report that they are weaker financially than one year ago. From 29 churches the count of the audiences Sunday morning and evening was secured. These churches have 8,113 members, but 4,686 was the total average attendance by count in the morning, and 6,255 in the evening. The average membership of these churches is 280; the average morning congregation 160, and evening 215. In only five churches is the average attendance as large as the membership. With three exceptions, the attendance in every one of the churches is larger in the evening than in the morning. From this fact it is evident that with the Baptists there is no problem about the second service, but rather as to the morning one. Dr. Bitting's final suggestion is: "More workers. It is absurd to think that one pastor of most of these churches can do all that is needed. For one to attempt it is suicidal. Enlarge the number of workers, and results will be better."

London's Spiritual and Social Needs

A most interesting Conference to consider the spiritual and social needs of that great city has recently been held at the Mansion House in London. It was convened under the auspices of the London Nonconformist Council, which, as the name indicates, includes representatives of the various Christian churches other than the Established and Roman Catholic. The President of the meeting was Mr. Percy W. Bunting, the editor of the "Contemporary Review." Among those present were many of the most eminent Nonconformists

of London. The Secretary of this Council is the Rev. John Matthews, and he presented an exhaustive report on the Religious and Social Condition of London. From that it is seen that the population of the city during the last decade has increased 866,671. The religious accommodation for that number ought, on the lowest computation, to provide for 544,000; the actual supply by all the churches provides for only 206,000. On the other hand, there is no perceptible diminution of public-houses. In the metropolitan police area the number of such houses is 14,100; the average for London is one licensed house for every 390 people. In considering the gravity of the outlook and what may be done to improve the condition, certain suggestions were made, the most important of which was more co-operation on the part of the churches. The first work of the associated churches should be a thorough house-to-house visitation of the people, in order that the churches and people may be brought into closer touch, and the needs and miseries of the people be discovered. After the presentation of this report four resolutions were adopted. We think they are important enough to be quoted in full. They are as follows:

That the London Nonconformist Council, having had the religious and social welfare of London under earnest consideration, deems it to be its duty by special resolution to call the serious attention of the Free Churches to the indifference of the masses of the people in London to the claims and work of the churches; the grave disparity between the increasing population of the metropolis and the religious provision made for them; and urges the adoption of such measures as shall bring the people and the churches into closer sympathy, and so lead to the winning of London for Christ.

That while the larger cities and towns of the United Kingdom have never lost touch of the working classes, and some of them have recently taken up united forward work and house-to-house visitation with very beneficial results, especially for the young, this assembly regrets that London, as a whole, remains behindhand in this important work. Deeply convinced of the value of house-to-house visitation of the people by united associations of Christian workers as the basis of successful evangelistic effort, this Assembly calls upon the Evangelical Free Churches to join in concerted action, to hold united special services, to carry out such united visitation, and to bring the whole strength of the churches to bear upon the needs of the metropolis.

That this assembly, impressed by the evils arising to all classes, but especially to young persons, from the prevalent practices of gambling, betting, intemperance, and social impurity, calls upon the authorities to put more fully into force the laws against these evils, and urges the adoption of such measures as shall remove from the streets of London the abounding temptations to social vice that now infest them. This assembly strongly recommends the extension of evening recreative and continuation schools, and trusts that earnest efforts will be put forth to gather the young people from the dangers of the streets at night into institutions that will prepare them for the duties of home and citizenship.

This assembly expresses its extreme satisfaction that the Local Government Board, the London County Council, and other bodies are taking steps to cope with the present and anticipated distress among the wage-earning classes in London during the coming winter, and to provide occupation for laborers unemployed. The assembly condemns the continuance of sweating practices in certain branches of industry, and emphatically affirms that the housing of 750,000 people in London, 300,000 of whom are children, in single-room tenements, is a discredit to a Christian civilization, and ought speedily to be remedied.

Practical Suggestions

The Rev. T. B. Stephenson, D.D., the eminent Wesleyan minister, took an optimistic view of this situation, as did all the other speakers, while all recognized the gravity of the problem. Dr. Stephenson declared that if the Methodists did their part in London they would have to build at once two hundred places of worship, each to accommodate one thousand persons. The Rev. W. J. Dawson, Congregationalist, declared that Christianity in London was not "played out," but only certain phases of it; that the workingman was not hostile to Christianity; and that if he were going to organize a mission for the most outcast part of London he would go to Belgravia. Dr. Joseph Parker also made a telling speech, emphasizing what is being already done, and advocating the suppression of public-houses (which is the English term for saloons) as the only way in which any great impression can be made on the misery and poverty of London. He declared that the churches ought, if necessary, to buy out the public-houses, and that the wonder is that men in London are as good as they are. He also advocated a much larger use of the public press by the churches. Dr. Pentecost argued in favor of more evangelistic preaching, while Dr. Charles Leach spoke of the difficulty of inducing multitudes to come to the churches when they are receiving improper wages and are herded together in one-room tenements where the common decencies of life are impossible. The facts in Dr. Leach's resolution are absolutely appalling. Seven hundred and fifty thousand people in London, of whom 300,000 are children, are living in the single-room tenements. Such conditions make

morality and decency an impossibility. We believe that meetings like this conference at the Mansion House should be held in every community, and especially in every large city. Among Christian workers there is too much work which fails because there is no clear idea of what needs to be done. Prayer-meetings which have become in many places a burden and a bore would possess thrilling interest if such topics as these were occasionally introduced.

The Salvationists in India

One of the most interesting religious publications which comes to our table is "The Conqueror," which is published monthly by the Salvation Army. The principal article in the November number is by Major Musa Bhai on "Hinduism," and is one of the broadest and best that we have read on the subject. The writer evidently agrees with Mozoomdar that the Christian missionaries in India have pursued too narrow a policy. He says that "a careful observation would reveal the astounding energy of believers in Hinduism and its hold upon the millions of this land." He then shows that the missionary who takes an idol from his pocket and offers that as an illustration of the religion of the Hindus does not give a fair impression of the condition of things in India. He makes the following points: "First, the Hindus are really in earnest in their religion." When one gets through the ceremonies, he will find poor starved souls hungering for God, and earnestly and honestly seeking to find him. What is needed is not a denunciation of this element of Hinduism, but such a direction of this misapplied earnestness as will turn it into the proper channel. "Second, the Hindus are active and self-sacrificing." They do not hesitate to give up their wealth and positions for their religion. They will endure an astonishing amount of suffering in order to secure peace with God. They will roam from place to place in greatest discomfort if they believe it is God's will. They will go on long pilgrimages, and endure every kind of torture, to get release from their sins. This is the very soil in which Christianity of the Apostolic sort may find speedy growth, but it must be of the genuine kind, and not that which merely substitutes one form for another. "Third, there is a perfect organization which works on its own Oriental hinges, providing some twenty-two millions of priests, ministers, preachers, traveling friars, and religious devotees serving as 'specials' or 'revivalists.'" The writer says: "Do you not think it would be an insult to offer a dry, theoretical Christianity to a nation with such earnestness and rich capacity for religion? . . . India will fall down and worship a living Christ if exemplified in his true image by the lives of his modern apostles in India."

Methodist Theological School in Sweden

We have been much interested in reading an account of the Theological School at Upsala, Sweden, under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The President of this institution is Albert Hallen, Ph.D., a graduate of Boston University, who spent much time as a student in Germany, then returned to Boston University as a Professor, and is now at the head of this new institution at Upsala. The importance of this work is realized when it is remembered that the Bishops of the Church heartily indorse it, and that a member of the New York East Conference has recently been chosen as financial agent for the purpose of securing in this country much-needed funds. The special call is for proper buildings and an adequate endowment. This new School of the Prophets is intended to provide ministers for both Sweden and Finland. Although we have called this a new school, it was established many years ago, but its progress has been so limited that the attention now given to it will make it practically a new enterprise. The Methodist Episcopal Church is making rapid strides in various European countries, and this theological seminary at Upsala, the home of the ancient University of Sweden, is only another indication of the progress which that Church is making.



—The fifth anniversary of the American Sabbath Union will be held in the Rev. Dr. D. J. Burrell's church, New York City, December 10-12. The anniversary sermon will be preached by Dr. Burrell on Sunday, December 10.