

The Religious World

The American Board at Madison

In another column we give an account of the proceedings of the American Board at Madison, Wis. In this column we desire to make special mention of two or three things of more than ordinary interest which marked the gathering. This meeting witnessed the retirement of the venerable Dr. N. G. Clark, who for so many years has been the Foreign Secretary of the Board, an event of which we speak elsewhere. The official paper which has interested us most is that of Secretary Judson Smith on "Intellectual Preparation for the Ministry." The subject is one of the greatest importance, and many of the abler and wiser missionaries, as well as native converts, are already emphasizing the fact that there is now need of the utmost discrimination as to the quality of the men who are sent to the foreign field. The reason of this is that the nature of missionary work has largely changed. In many of the fields the missionary is now practically the teacher and preparer of ministers and workers. It is he who imparts and impresses the ideas which the native preachers and workers take to the people. Dr. Smith well said at the beginning of his able paper: "Education and culture are essential to power in any undertaking." "Other things being equal, we know that of two men, the one of the most thorough mental training will serve us the best and serve us longest." "All knowledge and science and every human power belong to Christ's kingdom, owe service there, and win their highest place as they worship at the foot of the cross." Dr. Smith wisely recognizes the need of thorough intellectual preparation for foreign missionary work. He emphasizes the fact that the great missionaries of the past have been men of intellectual power, as Irenæus, St. Patrick, St. Columba, Boniface, Carey, Judson, Morrison. Other points emphasized in the paper are: "Every missionary must master a foreign language so as to make it the medium of thought and familiar speech;" "He must bear his part in translating the Bible into the vernacular of the land;" "He must organize branches, and conduct the institutions of education;" "He must study and master great problems." "A full college course for all, and a theological course also for ordained men, constitute the normal preparation for missionary work." "True missionary economy requires that only those who are well equipped be sent to the field." This paper is worthy of special consideration, not because it is abler than those presented by the other Secretaries, but because at the present time it is most important. Many wise observers have felt that the cause of missions has been hampered by missionaries who, however exalted in character, were the intellectual inferiors of those among whom they were working. This paper of Dr. Smith's indicates that the policy of the Board will be, in the future, still more than in the past, to send to the field only those who are fully equipped for their work. In addition to the most exalted and spiritual character, there ought always to be the most careful and thorough education. It is a delight to be able to read a report of a meeting of this ancient missionary society which contains no hint of controversy. For several years its anniversaries have not been harmonious, but the better day seems at last to have dawned. One feature of the meetings is worthy of especial commendation, and that is the substitution of addresses on subjects vital to the missionary work for the often perfunctory reports which occupied so much time in the past. There should now be a genuine revival of missionary interest and activity in all the Congregational churches of the land, and the Board ought at once to be freed from all pecuniary embarrassments and told by the churches to go forward in its splendid service for the kingdom of God.

Dr. Ramsay's Lectures

Professor W. M. Ramsay, D.C.L., of the University of Aberdeen, has just been giving a course of lectures in Auburn Theological Seminary, and he will speak before the students of Union Seminary on Thursday evening, October 18, when his subject will be "The Historian who Wrote the Acts of the Apostles." Professor Ramsay is one of the most eminent

of living scholars in his own department of investigation. His recent work on "The Church in the Roman Empire," composed largely of lectures delivered before Mansfield College, Oxford, has given him a unique and most enviable reputation. The book was even complimented and commended by the Pope. Dr. Ramsay is described as "a young-looking man, with a mustache and pointed beard, a small voice, a modest and quiet manner." His lectures at Auburn have been given the rare compliment of extended reports in the New York daily press. A correspondent of the "Evangelist," whom we take to be Professor S. M. Hopkins, writes most sympathetically of the work of Professor Ramsay at that Seminary. We think the following extracts are peculiarly significant. He says: "The appearance of such a scholar among us at the present time is significant and suggestive. He comes from an atmosphere of broad and liberal criticism. He is wholly indifferent to the fact that such criticism is just now under the ban of the dominant party in the Presbyterian Church, and that two of the most distinguished teachers in it have just been convicted of heresy for belonging to the same school of critics with himself. He is serenely unconscious that to throw overboard coolly the darling doctrine of inerrancy in the original autographs, to hold that inspiration is consistent with mistakes in the sacred writers, and that the only question to be considered in examining any narrative of fact or statement of doctrine in the Scriptures is not whether it is orthodox, but whether it is true, is to bring down upon his head vials of red-hot wrath from . . . those who at present dictate the policy of the Presbyterian Church." "The great thing is that in listening to this course of finely reasoned lectures the young candidates for the ministry at Auburn should have been taught the true method of studying the Scriptures; that the Book of Acts, for instance, is to be regarded as a part of the general historical literature of the world, and subject, in its interpretation, to the same canons of criticism as a book of Thucydides or Livy." It will be interesting to notice what reception these lectures of Professor Ramsay at Auburn will meet from the Presbyterian Church at large. They are not controversial; they are the work of a faithful and patient scholar whose ability is recognized around the world. In any other communion they would attract no attention for their novelty, but, belonging to the same class of lectures as those for which Professors Smith and Briggs have been condemned, we cannot help asking, Will Auburn Seminary now receive an admonition? If so, one of the most eminent and honored scholars of Presbyterianism in Scotland will be condemned. But we imagine that the era in which mediocre lawyers and preachers untrained in scholarly investigation are allowed to dictate to the ablest professors in the Presbyterian denomination what they shall discover in their investigations and teach in their class-rooms is about ended.

Congregationalists in Oregon

The Congregational Association of Oregon met with the church in Salem September 25. There were present twenty ministers and fifty-five delegates, which was a goodly number considering the long distances over which the delegates are compelled to travel. Action was taken urging the American Board to hold its next meeting with the First Congregational Church in Portland, Oregon. The church is one of the finest in the city. It has had a rapid growth, and exerts a wide influence in all the Northwest. We are sure that a meeting of the Board in that city would be a great help to spiritual Christianity in a region which, in the nature of things, can seldom enjoy such a privilege. Another action of the Association concerned the subject of Christian union. It announced itself to be in sympathy with the recent declaration of the Congregational Association of New Jersey on that subject, and reaffirmed its own resolutions on interdenominational comity adopted a year ago. In such fields the need of comity is even more evident than at the East. We have frequently seen, in little towns on the frontier, churches for every two or three hundred people, counting all ages and all classes. If proper comity were observed, we are convinced that there would be churches and ministers enough. This action of the Oregon Association is in the right direction. Another step was in the line of a more thorough education of the ministry, and this resolution was so important that we quote

it. It is as follows: "Resolved, That this Association records its deep conviction that no man should be encouraged to seek ordination at the hands of a council until he has completed a full course of preparation, either by a college and seminary course of study, or, if for any good reason such a course cannot be taken, by a good course of study, outlined and superintended by a committee of our representative ministers." It will no doubt seem to many that such a resolution is unwise, and they will ask, Why should the ministry be limited to educated men? We call the attention of such persons to the fact that those who are ordained to the ministry are ordained; not only as Christian workers, but as competent Christian teachers. To teach requires careful training. One of our prominent ministers recently declared that an uneducated ministry is the scourge of God. The adoption of such a resolution does not limit those who feel called on to do Christian work; it simply says that before a man is commended as a teacher he should be properly qualified for his work.

The theological seminaries this year seem to be prospering. We have already referred to the opening of the year in several institutions. We are now glad to report that the entering class at Yale Seminary is a large one, and that there are also large additions to the middle, senior, and graduate classes. One interesting feature is the fact that among the applicants are men of several nationalities and various shades of color. We are informed that the Junior Class is an exceptional one in point of scholarship, and that both East and West Divinity Halls are already crowded.

The Prison Association of New York The Prison Association of New York has fixed upon the 28th of October as the date for Prison Sunday. The object of the observance of this day is to call the attention of people through the State to the defects and needs of our penal system, the condition of the prisoners actually in confinement, and of those already released from prison. The Association earnestly opposes the constitutional amendment concerning prison labor. The Secretary of this Association is Mr. W. M. F. Round, and the cause must commend itself to all who are interested in the improvement of a large and needy class in our community.

We have been much interested in an account of a summer revival in the Wyoming and Lackawanna Valleys in Pennsylvania. In the midst of the northern anthracite coal-fields there is a population of about three hundred thousand persons on an area about forty miles long by five broad. In that district are gathered representatives of many nationalities, and the circumstances are such that a large proportion of the people have neglected religion. The revival originated with the Rev. Thomas W. Swan, of West Pittston, who interested Mr. Moody in this summer campaign. Before Mr. Moody's coming, meetings had been held by Major Whittle and other evangelists. The meetings were held in tents, in great halls, and in various places, and were attended by throngs of people. The results have been most encouraging.

The Industrial Christian Alliance Few organizations have grown faster during recent years than the Industrial Christian Alliance, which was started less than three years ago in Macdougall Street, New York. Its object is to help men to help themselves by furnishing means of honest livelihood and giving encouragement to those who are without home or means of support and yet honestly desire to improve their condition. As its name indicates, the Alliance is primarily industrial. It works largely with those who are unfortunate rather than criminal or vicious. It is entirely unsectarian. The movement has grown so that a new building is required, and an old-fashioned edifice in Bleecker Street has become its home, and is being transformed to accommodate the various activities which find their center there. There will be a people's restaurant, laundry, and various shops—as carpenters', shoemakers', tailors'. There will be a social hall, and a series of smaller rooms, such as sitting, reading, writing, and music rooms. There will also be a library containing about three thousand volumes. In the building there will be dormitories arranged to accommodate about one hundred persons. One of the most difficult problems

is to relieve want without creating pauperism. To accomplish this result is the object of the Alliance. Its incorporators number many of the most prominent citizens of New York, and its work during the past winter, when there was so much suffering, was efficient, and, we believe, wisely managed.

To the High-Class Chinese It requires a good deal of heroism just now for a missionary to sail from this country to China, and yet the Rev. Gilbert Reid left New York on the 4th of October to continue his work among the higher classes in that Empire. Mr. Reid has long been convinced that the higher classes in that country, as well as in other heathen countries, have been neglected by the missionaries, and that men qualified for that service ought to be commissioned by the societies. He has become independent of the Presbyterian Foreign Board, and his work in the future will be interdenominational and dependent on the general Christian public. Mr. Reid believes that if the higher classes are reached it will be much easier to reach the lower, especially in China; and he also believes that the war between China and Japan offers a unique opportunity for the establishment of Christian institutions. We believe that the interdenominational idea will give to Mr. Reid's work an element of peculiar strength. Foreigners do not understand or care for our sectarian divisions. Mr. Reid will have a great advantage in not feeling the slightest obligation to maintain the distinctive tenets of any sect. Mr. Reid is a graduate of Hamilton College and Union Seminary. He has already had large experience in China, and has proved himself one of the most efficient of the missionaries to that Empire. He goes out with the hearty commendation of the Presbyterian Board, under which he formerly labored.

A University Settlement in India Something new in the line of university settlements is contemplated by certain young women, all of whom are students either of Newnham or Girton Colleges at Cambridge. The leader in the movement is Miss A. de Selincourt, daughter of the senior deacon of the Westminster Chapel in London, and one of the most brilliant scholars of Girton College, from which she has just graduated. The plan is to establish a University Settlement in Bombay. Miss de Selincourt, the Secretary, has issued a circular, from which we make a few quotations as follows: "It has been thought that we might best obey His call by forming a Women's University Missionary Settlement, in which girls from our colleges could live together and unite in educational, medical, and evangelistic work. There seems to be a peculiarly favorable opening at the present time for work of this kind in Bombay. . . . It is greatly needed among the Parsees there. In the course of time we hope that a medical branch may be set on foot. If among the volunteers there are any lady doctors and trained nurses, a hospital or a medical dispensary would add immensely to the use of the settlement." Miss de Selincourt quotes at length from an interesting letter from a Parsee gentleman, a native of Bombay, who greets the proposed plan with great enthusiasm. He says: "There is a growing desire on the part of the Parsees in Bombay for the higher education of their women. The Parsees, as a rule, do not care to mingle with other races in India, but they are ready and willing to associate with Europeans. Besides unmarried girls, there are large numbers of young married ladies who are hardly out of their teens who would be glad to attend college classes." This movement originated with a band of Cambridge students, who afterwards talked the matter over with representatives of the Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society, and they have now formed a small advisory council, who have experience in foreign missionary work, for the furtherance of the scheme. The circular says: "The settlement would be worked upon distinctly evangelical lines. It would, with this reservation, seek to embrace the thoughts of all sections of the Church of Christ. Each member would preserve her connection with that particular branch to which she belonged, while working in harmony with all." All the ladies are educated and university-trained. They go out positively committed to the Christian faith and yet without being professionally engaged in its propagation, thus disarming prejudice.