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A Native Ministry in Foreign Fields.

We are impressed with a statement made by one of our missionaries in China, Rev. J. H. Finley, who writes in our number of September 26th, of the Kuling Convention. He says, "One fact, however, stands out clear, distinct and emphatic, and that is that China will never be evangelized by foreigners." He suggests, as a means of securing an adequate rank in native workers, establishing seminars, where the native ministry may receive a regular course of training; also that each missionary train men practically under his own supervision, and that Bible schools be established with shorter courses of instruction. He says "it not time the Church should be giving more prominence to this department of our mission work? We believe that training schools should be planted throughout our mission fields where boys and girls may be taught by thousands the truths of our religion, and prepared to become evangelists and teachers. Our encyclopedias of missions will show that the most successful missions have been those in which native missionaries have been trained and sent out in large numbers. The native is not exposed to the prejudice and open opposition so generally encountered by foreigners. Especially in lands like China where race prejudice and bigotry are almost universal, the native evangelist must have access to classes and influence over the populace which are denied to foreigners.

Furthermore, it is probable that the expense involved in the education of one or young men and in sending him to his field of work could be sufficiently for training a score or more of native evangelists, already proficient in the dialects of the people and identified with them in all their highest interests.

We would not reduce the numbers of our forces in the foreign field nor the number of men and women that are being sent out each year. But we would have greater prominence given to training a native ministry. We would have Christian teachers sent in large numbers to establish schools, and Christian physicians to establish hospitals and have these side by side as allies at the mission stations, and from these schools would be expected to be called to preach good things to their own people. We have such schools already. Let us increase them ten fold. A manual training department and instruction in certain branches of physics would attract pupils, and qualify them for practical life. Many an evangelist, no doubt, could be self-sustaining because of superior skill in a chosen department of mechanical industry.

If it be suggested that those in the field are the best judges of methods to be used, we reply that our text is taken from one who has been in the field for a quarter of a century, and we learn from missionary exchanges that the methods which we advocate are being employed with most gratifying effectiveness and increasing prominence by a number of societies and boards of the evangelical churches.

An examination of a work entitled, "A Native Ministry in Foreign Fields," by Rev. James D. Dennis, D. D., will impress the reader with the marvelous results that have been wrought out through the medium of educational institutions in foreign lands. As the merest suggestion of these results we note that "the educational quickening which touched the cone of Europe as early as the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighth century was traceable to the influence of Irish-Scottish missionaries, who, wherever they went founded centres of learning." Of Dr. Duff it is said that "of the forty-eight educated men who were won to Christianity in 1811 Christ thoroughgoing were ministers, ten were catechists, seventeen were professors and high-grade teachers, eight government servants of the higher grade and four assistant surgeons and doctors." Of the scores of mission schools in Japan we note the school of the Presbyterian mission at Tokio in which nearly every graduate became a professing Christian and more than eighty per cent. became Christian workers; also of the 164 graduates of Xobe College, 100 have been in Christian service, and of the entire number of pupils, ninety per cent became Church members. The success of this project, especially that found in the volumes quoted above, is profoundly impressive.

Sunday and the Railroads.

A conference was held last Tuesday, October 3rd, at the Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, on the subject of freight traffic and excursions on the railroads on Sunday. It is the result of the movement in which Dr. W. W. Smith, of the Woman's College, has been the active and effective leader. The conference was attended by President Stephens, of the Chesapeake and Ohio; President Johnson, of the Norfolk and Western; Vice-President Finley, of the Southern; President's Assistant Duke, of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac, and by other railroad officials. Committees were present from the Protestant Churches in Virginia, including Drs. H. J. Emfling and H. E. Caikins, for the Synod of Virginia and Lucien Cocke, of Roanoke, was made chairman and Mr. George E. Caikins secretary. The Lynchburg News reports as follows:

The meeting was held for the purpose of discussing the situation in the State regarding the question of the operation of freight and excursion trains. The old law relating to the matter was long ago recognized as too drastic, and that introduction at the last session of the Legislature was regarded as being so much in favor of the railroads as to make it ineffective.

From the outset, the discussion of the question was characterized by utmost harmony and good feeling. At no point in the proceedings was there the slightest indication of any disposition on the part of either side to make unreasonable demands. The representatives of the railroads gave every evidence of sincerely desiring the adoption of a measure that would promote the observance of the Sabbath, give their men the rest to which they were entitled, and satisfy the best public sentiment of the State. They were entirely frank in their admissions as to the advisability of eliminating the Sunday excursion.

The conference decided, after a thorough discussion of all facts and conditions bearing on the matter that the railroad should appoint a committee of three and the interdenominational commission a committee of three, and that these two committees should meet and agree upon some line of action, this agreement to be reported back to the conference, and then, if acted upon favorably, to be reported to the various church organizations represented in the conference, for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the terms of the agreement were satisfactory.

"Jesus' Creed" is the title of a discussion in the Congregationalist of "The Two Great Commandments." We refer to it not because of any pronounced statement that it contains of either truth or error, but because it is a sample of a vast amount of religious writing that was printed in the public prints. The writer says, "God is one. This Jesus taught as the key to all truth. Jesus proclaimed God as a person with whom he had the relation of a son to his father. This relation between him and the one God was so complete that his life was wholly a carrying out of the will of God his Father. In consequence of this perfect union he fully knew the mind and purpose of God. Jesus was able to bring others into this relation with God, as no one else could do, and also to make God known to them even as God was known by him." This is the writer's nearest approach to the