

UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE

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I.—LITERARY.

THE SEMINARY COURSE OF STUDY—ITS RANGE, STANDARD, EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS.

In the last issue we endeavored to set forth the *purpose* of the Seminary, to guard against certain developments of seminary discipline; and to maintain that the church should have in every age a set curriculum, suited to the needs of the time, through which the seminaries shall carry their students. In the present issue we offer some further considerations on our general subject.

V.—THE CONTENTS OF THE SEMINARY COURSE AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION AMONG THE DIFFERENT CHAIRS.

According to the church's statement of the purpose of the seminary, in 1811, it was to teach the Hebrew and New Testament Greek, the exegesis of both testaments, sacred geography and antiquities, the overthrow of Deism, Natural, Didactic, Polemic and Casuistic Theology, Church History, Pastoral Theology and Church Government and Discipline. Our Standards also imply that the student must be trained in all these things. That is, a place must be given in the course to Exegetical, Apologetical, Systematic, Historical and Practical Theology. Stating the matter in this general way most of the churches of the Reformed faith would say the same. But, this by the way, the statement by our Assembly of 1811 is a very fine one. We have no time for an exposition of it; but call attention to one or two points.

1. The student is required to study, at the seminary, the Deistic Controversy and thus become qualified to become a

V.—CRITICISMS AND REVIEWS.

MODERN MISSIONS IN THE EAST: THEIR METHODS, SUCCESSES AND LIMITATIONS. *By Edward A. Lawrence, D. D. With an Introduction by Edward D. Eaton, D. D., President of Beloit College.* 8vo. pp. xvii and 338. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers. 1895.

"The substance of this volume was first presented in the form of lectures in Andover Theological Seminary, on the Hyde Foundation, and subsequently in Yale Divinity School and Beloit College. The contents are based upon a twenty month's missionary journey around the world with the express purpose of studying the mission work of various denominations." In preparing the work the author was buoyed up with the hope that he might frame a text-book suitable for "those who wish to look into the science of missions."

It is greatly to be regretted that Dr. Lawrence died so early, that he was not permitted to serve the cause of missions longer. Few men were more competent to serve the cause with tongue and pen. Few men have seemed to love the cause so much. But we are profoundly thankful that God enabled him to write this book.

The book before us is, indeed, worthy of use as a text-book in the science of missions. It may be incomplete in parts. It may be open to some small objections; but, what text-book made by a mere man is not more or less defective? We have no hesitation in saying that this is the ablest single work on modern missions of which we have any knowledge.

In the first chapter our author treats of "Providence in Missions" and incidentally treats historically of Christian Missions in the past ages of Christianity. In his second chapter he treats of the "Principles of Missions," the "Aim, Scope, Motive, Call, Fitness, Fitting," a very suggestive and helpful chapter. In succeeding chapters the special problems of missions in China, Corea, Japan, India, and the Turkish Dominions, are helpfully treated. Chapter VI. on "Entrance into Work" is of great practical value to the candidate for mission work. In chapter VII. we have a thorough handling of the "Departments of Missionary Work in their Variety." Chapter VIII. presents an eminently useful discussion of "Home Rest of the Missionary." "The Problems of Missions" are well stated and discussed in the ninth chapter. Some unusually attractive "Sketches of the Mission Field" are given in the tenth chapter. The Relation of the Church to Missions is suggestively treated in the eleventh chapter. The twelfth is perhaps the most important chapter in the book:—"The Spiritual Expansion of Christendom."

We wish this book could be widely read. It would do much to stir up the common mind of the church to the unspeakable importance of pushing evangelistic work among the heathen *now*. Things are moving

fast in the world to-day. They are moving fast not only in the New World but in the Old. "Old things are passing away." The peoples of Asia and Africa are advancing to new stages in their civil, material, intellectual and religious history. They are adopting the arts and customs secular, of Christian nations and they are going to change their religion. Shall we allow them to reform and restore their heathen systems to make them less vulnerable to attack, and so to become harder than they already are to win to Christianity? Or shall we allow them to heathenize Christianity and adopt that and become ten times more difficult to win to a true Christianity? There is no estimating the responsibility that rests on our generation. The command to "disciple all nations" is on us as it has been on the church since our Divine first uttered it. The opportunity, unbounded, on every side, gives tremendous emphasis to the command. The destiny not only of the present generation of heathens but of decades and perhaps centuries of peoples who will become devotees of a more defensible heathenism or of a heathenized Christianity demands that we shall heed the command of our Lord. The reading of this book will open our eyes still more widely to our present duty to the heathen.

There are a few remarks which we regret, and all the more because the general character of the work is so good. E. g. On page 53 he says the missionary "needs to be one capable of seeing the deep meaning in the remark of Rothe, that there is nothing more changeable than Christianity, but that in this lies not its weakness but its strength." Now Christianity, i. e. the Christian system, is something *given* of God. It should never be changed. Changes in it are no better than the calf worship of ancient Israel, in principle. The church it is true, should grow in the comprehension of that system. That sort of change is allowable. But this is a very different thing from which we understand Rothe and our author to teach. Neologists like to talk of holding old truths under new forms, albeit to a man of plain common sense they are holding instead of the "old truths" something quite different.

After the same fashion the author says on page 245: "The first organization given a native church cannot well be anything more than tentative. As the church develops it will choose its own form and make its own changes." This passage clearly betrays the fact that Dr. Lawrence believes in *no jure divino* church polity. He gives man a chance to run into calf-worship here again. But there is just as little ground for thinking that God will be pleased with a people for changing his ordained and revealed, preferred, form of church government, as there was for thinking that he would be pleased with the Northern tribes for setting up the calf-worship at Bethel and Dan.

On pages 259 and 260 we have an account a Fourth of July Sabbath in Japan. The author was alone. A part of his day he spent well. But it was a descent when he pulled out his "little American flag," made it "float in the breeze." We are not at all convinced that in this way "the day was appropriately honored." It is a small thing; but it is wrong in principle. Let the American traveler float his flag if he wishes, but let him give the Lord's own day to him. It may be said that this however is of a piece with a good deal of Fourth of July Sunday preaching North.

But when the fourth of July falls on Sunday, preachers running over with patriotic eloquence ought to discharge it on the Saturday previous or the Monday following. These preachers who make "patriotic" addresses on Sunday falling on the Fourth of July outrun the mass of our people in dishonoring that particular Sabbath.

We don't wish to be set down as unpatriotic. We claim a real devotion to our own country, but we ought to contend for the Lord's own in his behalf. And we are sorry that the writer of such a book has such an imperfect conception of the Sabbath obligation.

But notwithstanding these and a few similar defects we have read no book recently which has treated its subject better than this one.

Hampden-Sidney, October 28, 1897.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

THE GIST OF JAPAN, THE ISLANDS, THEIR PEOPLE AND MISSIONS. *By the Rev. R. B. Peery, A. M., Ph. D., of the Lutheran Mission, Saga, Japan.* Pp. 317. \$1.25. Revell Company, New York. 1897.

There are some books that it is a pleasure to read. This is one of them. It is one of a new series of books issued by the Revell Co. on mission countries. It is gotten up in a very neat, bright and characteristic binding and at once attracts one's passing notice. It is printed in clear type on good stout paper and is easily read. The style of the book is well calculated to sustain the interest of the popular reader and it does not aspire to being more than a popular treatise, but ever and anon the author lets fall some polysyllabic technical phrase which seems strangely out of place. This is the first book offered to the public by this young author and we are disposed to be generous.

The title of the book strikes one at first as being rather pretentious, coming from one who had been but four years on the field and a part of that period spent in the homeland. But in reality it *is* the gist of Japan because it gives the essence of what one most desires to know about that country. There are many points in the book which make it worthy of hearty endorsement.

It is up to date in its freshness of information and vigorous dealing with practical issues. The latest results of mission policy and the causes of complication are clearly set forth so that the status quo of missionary operations in Japan is gained by the reader of this book as from no other book that we have seen.

One can but admire the courageous independence of the author which he exhibits in calling things by their right names for he does not use that polite circumlocution so common among the Japanese themselves and many, alas, who have visited their country. The object of the book is to set before the church at home the missionary work in Japan as it is and not as one would like to see it. This latter is too often the view presented to the church at home by returned missionaries and fosters a romantic and unreal conception of conditions as they are to-day. But with a boldness which will likely be at the cost of some popularity and which will arouse some criticism on the part of Japan's too enthusiastic