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I.—LITERARY.

THE TESTING SYSTEM FOR MINISTERIAL STUDENTS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND.

The testing system for ministerial students in the Southern Presbyterian Church is far from giving universal satisfaction. No proposed changes have met with a favorable reception at the hands of the majority of our rulers. But all parties are ready to admit that practically the examining of our candidates is very often most imperfect and unsatisfactory. Laxity is the common characteristic of most of the examinations conducted by the Presbyteries, while incompetence on the part of the examiners is not unheard of.

We are not concerned here to inquire whether the trouble springs from the requirements of the Book, or from the nature of the personnel of the Presbyteries—whether the standard set up in our Constitution is too high, or the material of our Presbyteries too low. We merely affirm as an acknowledged fact that there is dissatisfaction with the system by which we test the students' qualifications for the work of the ministry.

This being so, it may be fairly assumed that an account of the testing system in application in a sister church of noble repute will be received with interest. We do not think of advocating the adoption of the Irish scheme by our own church. We hope simply to stir up the minds of our brethren, by giving them a new plan to think on, to the bettering, in a way which shall seem good to them, our testing system.

face of malice and envy, that so far as I am able to judge by the information of all history the Christian world since the days of the apostles had never a synod of more excellent divines."

As he remarks their ability, and their conscientious and protracted labors to get at the truth, their good conservatism and their desire for progress in stating the truth, no matter how much he may have loved the Westminster Standards the reader will give them a still higher place in his regard. Truth is more beautiful in proportion as it is more clearly and certainly seen.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

Hampden-Sidney, Va., Aug. 22nd, '96.

FOREIGN MISSIONS AFTER A CENTURY. *By Rev. James S. Dennis, D. D., of the American Presbyterian Mission, Beirut, Syria. Fourth Edition.* Fleming H. Revell Company: New York, Chicago, Toronto.

The Fleming H. Revell Company sends forth many excellent books, but it is safe to say that it has not yet sent forth a worthier volume than this one; nor is there likelihood of its doing so in the near future. This is a volume to tell powerfully on the life and progress of the church.

Not only does the publisher deserve a share of praise for this book, as for every good book readily and well brought out; but Princeton Theological Seminary has the credit of having called forth the present work from Dr. Dennis. The establishment of lectureships on missions in many of the theological seminaries of the country is timely. It is one of the ways of acquainting the people of God with his great works among all peoples, the grand progress of his kingdom, the opportunities of service, and the consequent responsibilities. Princeton now has such a lectureship. And Dr. Dennis's book gives to the reading world the six lectures first delivered on the basis of this lectureship. He says in his preface, "These lectures were delivered in spring of 1893, before the faculty and students of Princeton Theological Seminary, on the basis of the newly established Students' Lectureship on Missions, being the first course delivered on that foundation."

The author writes over his dedicatory page:

TO THE
MEMORY OF
ARTHER MITCHELL,
WHO LOVED THE CAUSE OF WORLD-WIDE MISSIONS
WITH A PASSION WHICH HE CAUGHT FROM HIS MASTER,
THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED.

In his first lecture, Dr. Dennis aims first to prepare his hearers to readily receive all that can be justly said of the history and conditions of Foreign Mission work. He shows that his message, if adequate, ought to be received, on account of the nature of the work, with special honor. In the latter part of this lecture he sets forth the call to the church for increased efforts in this department of work. He shows that it is at once

a duty and a privilege to take advantage of the abounding, world-wide opportunities offered peculiarly to the church of our own age.

In his second lecture he sets forth the political and religious condition of nearly all the greater peoples yet in need of having missionaries sent them. His exposition of the needs of these peoples is admirable. The only fault we have to find with the lecture is in the misapplication of Paul's "Vision of a Macedonian Man." The most solid way of representing the Church's call to go to China, is to place China's needs alongside Christ's universal commands to "disciple all nations," "preach the Gospel to every creature." The New Testament does not teach that Macedonia wished to have the preachers of the cross. China does not, as a unit, desire evangelical religion, nor does Japan. However, our objection is against the mere form in which the lecturer expresses himself, not against the truth of which his paper is full.

Lecture third is devoted to an exposition of the conflicts which missionaries of our day have to wage on the Foreign field. This is a very valuable chapter. Among the conflicts named and illustrated are, *that with a self-centered Christianity at home, that with misrepresentations on the part of those who bear false testimony against the cause, those with the political and commercial ambitions of European governments, and with vice and greed as exhibited in the lives of unworthy representatives of Eastern civilization.* Nine conflicts, altogether, are named and expounded.

The fourth lecture is devoted to a consideration of the problems of theory and method in missions. The problems named and discussed by the lecturer are, those of theory, finance, co operation, method, native development. The discussion of the problem of Theory is the least satisfactory part of this lecture. Dr. Dennis says that a true theory of missions involves correct ideas as to motive of, object of, the necessity of, and the results to be aimed at, in missions. In treating of the *necessity* of missions, he is at considerable pains to show that there may be "hope of the *possible* salvation of some heathen" adults who are totally unacquainted with the Gospel. He supposes that there may be cases of humble dependent trust in God with real grief for sin as displeasing to God among pagans who have never had a ray of Gospel light. This seems to us in the teeth of Romans 10:10-15, Paul seems to teach that just such a state of heart as our lecturer supposes may be in the unevangelized heathen must be preconditioned by hearing the word. What is the difference between the saving faith of which Paul here speaks, and that attitude of soul supposed by our author to be in the occasional heathen? Aside from this, however, our author shows the necessity of missions strongly. He shows that the vast majority of heathen give no evidence of any such sense of dependence on God, trust in Him, grief for sin and so forth; that every argument valid as a reason for preaching the Gospel at home is valid for preaching it among the heathen.

The fifth lecture sets forth present day controversies with opposing religions—an able and well-considered lecture—in the teeth of much ill-digested rubbish from badly informed students of "Comparative Religions."

The last lecture gives an inspiring summary of the success of missions in the 19th century.

The book ought to be in the hands of every pastor in the land. Imperfections attach to it. But they are slight in comparison with its good qualities; and we know of no other book which will do for the pastor at home the important work which this book does. It supplies facts for monthly concerts and missionary sermons which the people should know.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

February 3rd, 1896.

A SERMON. Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Waco, Texas, on Thanksgiving Day, November 29th, 1894. *By the pastor, Rev. S. A. King, D. D.* Columbia, Mo.: E. W. Stephens, Printer, 1895.

This sermon is printed in a neat pamphlet of about 26 pages. The sermon is preceded by a good photogravure of the author. It is followed by one of his church building in Waco. It may be obtained from the author at 10 cents a copy, or at \$1.00 per dozen.

Dr. King takes for his text, Luke 12:48: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more." Among the great things which God has done for us, he mentions: *The reservation of this great land to our Protestant forefathers; the settlement of the land and the shaping of its institutions by colonists, especially the influence of the Scotch-Irish on this country; the consequent religious liberty, and provision for education.* The preacher then makes an eloquent plea that the sacred trust which has passed down to us may be kept, points to the Bible as the source of our peculiar blessings, and pleads with all comers to our shores to respect the Bible, the home, the sanctuary and the Sabbath.

This sermon is a scholarly, historical production, a Biblical one in its tone, an eloquent one.

Several years ago when about to hear the honored pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Waco for the first time, we were advised to expect a great sermon. The present pamphlet is a noble example, we imagine, of Dr. King's preaching. Long may his bow abide in strength.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

Orlando, Fla., March 18th, 1896.

FOREIGN MISSIONS. Their Place in the Pastorate, in Prayer, in Conference. Ten Lectures. *By Augustus C. Thompson.* Author of "Moravian Missions," "The Mercy Seat," "The Better Land," etc. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1889.

Every pastor ought to have this book. It will give him a better idea of his sphere. It will heighten his sense of obligation to support Foreign missions. It will do something toward showing him the relation between prayer and the success of the Gospel. And it will be of great practical