

27 1912

# THE NEW-YORK OBSERVER

## Faith

There have been days, and brighter, when faith would not more staunchly grow; but when the sky is o'ercast with clouds and the wintry blasts of the world's great sorrows chill the life, faith, somehow, comes back to warm the heart and clear the mists away. Then--not till then--do we see without the darkened glass, and the vision is golden; and then, we know, not as in part, but even as He knows and is able to be known, Who teaches us, as children are taught, to reach our hands out and up to Him.

AM. FINE-ARTS

**JANUARY 25,**  
**1912**

# THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

Vol. XC, No. 4

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 1912.  
Established in 1823.

Whole No. 4629

## Hammering Away

BY CLELAND B. McAFEE, D.D.

There is a saying of Sancho Panza, "Pray to God and keep hammering away!" Both lines of action are important. Some of us pray easily, and some of us hammer away steadily, but it takes both to make either really successful. Prayer is not meant to be a shield for inactivity; it is not a polite form of laziness. When we say we have left a thing entirely to God, we must be sure that He has not given it back to us to be attended to for Him. On the other hand, struggling and straining to get something done often wears us out when prayer would so stimulate us that we would do better work. We pray best when we hammer away, and we hammer away most effectively when we pray.

When we work without prayer we are treating our task or our problem as though it were our own. When we join prayer to our work, we come to realize that our task is God's and is given us by Him. Prayer reminds us of the higher partnership under which we do our life business. It keeps a duty from seeming impossible or a result from seeming incredible. When they asked Morrison if he thought he could make any impression on China, he replied, "No, but I think God can." He never learned that from merely hammering away. He faced an impossible situation with entire equanimity because he had counted God in, and in the light of His presence the situation was not at all impossible.

But prayer gives us patience to keep hammering away. All of us ministers know the "sag" of the second or third year of a pastorate, when the new is worn off both pastor and people. The pastor has learned what fixed elements there are in his new church, what his people will not do and where their hard spots are. The people have learned what the new pastor cannot or will not do, how he will or will not preach this or that kind of sermon, and all the rest. For a year or so the new hope carries them over hard places. But there are not many pastors who have not had days in the second or third year when a call somewhere else would not have been welcomed. They are days when letters go to close ministerial friends in which much can be read between the lines. It is a critical time. Pass it safely and new values will appear, real values, in pastor and people. Happy the man to whom the call does not come! Let him keep hammering away at his work. His blows may not make a tune, but they will keep up his courage, and as he takes God into his thought he will not fail.

Mothers know more about it for their children than fathers. Generally there is a discouraging period in a boy's life, when he seems hard as adamant, closed against good influences and counsel, seemingly started on a wrong course. Often a girl has a time of giddiness, becomes boy-struck, foolish, unreasonable. Other people, fathers often included, lose patience with them. Fathers generally say that they "will come out all right." Mothers may think that, but they are pretty sure that they must be brought out right; they will not "come out" so without somebody's care. So they pray to God and keep hammering away. More counsel, more advice, more warning—how amazing mothers are! And how contemptible a grown man seems when he declares he was given too much advice when he was a boy, or had too much religion in his boyhood, and that he now disregards all of it—how contemptible he seems! Never mind, you mothers! You are in the right of it. Keep hammering away, and be sure to pray to God while you do it.

The rule holds in all good work. Prayer and hammering away are the two straps by which all heavy loads are lifted, all great tasks accomplished. Young men succeed in business,

young women become good teachers, Sunday school workers gain power, church helpers gain skill, by doing both. Some people can make great plans, wise plans, can announce them in the papers, can ask God's blessing on them, and then see them fail utterly because they have no patience to work them out. They must have new schemes to work on, must go around tapping here and tapping there, striking steadily nowhere until the rock breaks. Others can wear their lives out in good deeds, doing their utmost to make plans work, pounding away on obdurate situations, and getting nothing accomplished. We need fall into neither mistake. We can learn to pray to God and keep hammering away.

*Brooklyn, New York.*

## HOME MISSIONS OFFICIALS CONFER

The Home Missions Council held its annual meeting January 17-18 in the assembly room of the Presbyterian Home Board in the Presbyterian Building, New York. The Council is composed of the Home Mission Boards representing the evangelical, religious bodies in the United States. During its three years of existence it has helped to make much history, and the plans more fully developed at this meeting will make still more.

The report of the Committee on Indian Affairs is always intensely interesting. Dr. Thomas C. Moffett is the chairman of this committee. For some months an attorney has been retained in Washington to represent the Council in the interests of the Indians. This counsel is no less eminent than the Hon. Henry B. F. Macfarland, who has rendered signal service and has in hand now several matters of great importance. At no point have the home mission forces of the various religious bodies come together more harmoniously or effectively than through the activities of this Indian committee.

The investigation of neglected fields instituted at the last meeting of the Council has been in progress. The report of the Council's special committee at this session, and the recommendations for the further prosecution of the task, elicited the greatest interest. Among the recommendations heartily adopted was the co-operation of the Boards, through a committee of five, with the State Survey committees, organized in fifteen of the Western States: These State committees are already at work, and by July 1, 1912, it is anticipated that a survey of this vast region by school districts in the discovery of religious conditions will have been completed.

Plans for this survey were inaugurated through the Council's special committee and the deputation from the boards who visited these States during November and December. Consultations were held in each State with field superintendents, State and district committeemen, State board members and others directly concerned with the administration of home mission affairs. The plan for the complete survey then proposed was unanimously adopted.

During one day for an hour and a half the Council of Women's Home Mission Boards met in joint session with the Home Mission Council when the report of a special committee was received and its recommendations heartily adopted. This committee had in hand the proposition of a plan of joint campaign in the interests of the home mission cause. The plan, enthusiastically supported by both organizations, contemplates the setting apart of the period of November 17-24, 1912, as special home mission week, when all the churches of all denominations will be asked to unite in the systematic presentation of the home mis-