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NOTE AND COMMENT

The Advance, commenting on the course of a New England Congregational minister who wants the church door "absolutely open" to all, says that with such a door there would be no inside or outside. This is well put. If church membership does not at least attempt to distinguish between the converted and the unconverted, between the Church and the world, there is no use of it.

The Third Annual Conference on the Sunday School and Missions will be held at Silver Bay on Lake George, N.Y., July 15-23, 1908. The general subject of the Conference will be "Missionary Education in the Sunday School." The programme is planned so as to include both a thorough consideration of the problem in the local school and a full discussion of the editorial, administrative, and other work; and each feature will be cared for by an expert.

The new British Premier seems to have made a mistake in proposing old age pensions outright. It is true, the sum is only \$1.25 a week, to persons over seventy years of age; and, considering the relief of the poor rates, the expense will be manageable. But the principle is the same as if the pension were larger. The German system of compulsory insurance is far better. Here the workman in large factories, the employer, and the government unite in paying annual premiums, which entitle the insured to an annuity. This is a business proposition, and an entirely different thing from Mr. Asquith's plan.

General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, is now in his eightieth year. His seventy-ninth birthday was made the occasion of a great ovation in Queen's Hall, London. He deserved it, for he is a very remarkable man, both for what he has done and for what he is still doing. At the ovation given in his honor, he spoke for over an hour, and the only sign of age was a little feebleness in his voice at first, which disappeared as he warmed up. Speaking of his present condition he said: "I can still, I think, do something that is worth being read and listened to and seriously considered." "As for my soul, I am still on the old foundation, and still glorying in the old experience." He retains unbounded confidence in the future of the Army, and declares himself confident of its power to adapt itself to new conditions.

Hitherto in China the Romanist bishops claimed the rank of mandarins. A contemporary states that the Rescript granting official rank to Roman Catholic clerics has been cancelled. The Rescript never met with entire favor; and the privileges granted under it were much abused. The anomalous nature of the position which had arisen may be estimated from the fact that, while there are only nine vicars in the Empire, forty-six Romanist bishops claimed equal rank with them. The withdrawal of the privileges is regarded as a very important step, which will, it is believed, put an end to many difficulties arising between mandarins and priests on account of the special protection extended to all professing Roman converts. Moreover, in many places the work of Protestant missionaries was being seriously hindered, and the placing of Romanists once more on an equal footing will be a matter of considerable satisfaction.

The Rev. Ivor J. Robertson, M. A. of Regent-square Church, London, writing in the local "Supplement" for May at the close of his first year's ministry, thus characterises the difficulties of a London pastorate:—"The constant and manifold strain, the fact that with more expenditure of energy one gets less done in London than perhaps anywhere else, the abiding perplexities as to how far to reserve oneself from outside claims, and how to lay out to best advantage what one may have to give. Doubtless the same perplexities and difficult problems meet every pastor in large cities, whether in Canada or Britain.

Already, says the West Land, there are instances of resentment if not actual disobedience of the new mandate of the Catholic hierarchy regarding marriages. It will not be a popular law with the masses for it adds another arbitrary power to the priesthood. Not long ago a Catholic couple came to one of our ministers for marriage because their own priest had demanded an exorbitant fee in advance before he would perform the ceremony. Exaction of this kind will be still more easily possible under the new priestly monopoly. The evident resentment of at least some of the Catholic public may be due to a growing indifference to all concerns of the Church, but it may also be due to a growing sense of justice and freedom.

The subject of the wheat crop is always an interesting one to western men, says the Christian Guardian, and as soon as it is possible to arrive at conclusions that are in any sense reliable, men begin to figure upon the wheat probabilities for the year. It is estimated that this year there are 7,000,000 acres seeded to wheat in the Canadian West. It seems probable that this is rather a large estimate, as it means an increase over last year of 2,000,000 acres. While this is not impossible, it is such a large increase as to be somewhat discounted by conservative estimates. The same estimate also reckons upon 125,000,000 bushels of wheat. Again it seems hardly probable that this figure will be reached, but present indications certainly seem to point to the largest wheat crop ever harvested in the west. If the weather conditions are fairly favorable.

In tendering his resignation to the session of Deer Park Church, Rev. D. C. Hossack, wrote: "I am resigning that I may deal in a public and practical way with a great moral question which has been discussed academically, but without that result which is desired. I refer to the abolition of the bar. The academic question of personal liberty is not involved as I am not referring to prohibition. The bar as an institution of our Province in the opinion of very many is a social blight, a menace to morality and an economical burden. It justifies its own banishment. The miseries which spring from it appeal to all men to abolish it. As it is a Provincial institution, every citizen is personally responsible and cannot discharge his responsibility, by silence. Those who now suffer by this institution are calling for help. The rising generation are calling for help. I for one am not prepared to decline that call.

A medical missionary, writing to an American contemporary, says: "Indian women are awakening to a new self-consciousness, a new dissatisfaction. Within five years I have listened to a Hindu woman addressing a mixed assembly; a Mohammedan woman, M. Mahbub Alam, edits a newspaper in Lahore for the purpose of agitating questions of social reform, like education of girls and re-marriage of widows; and I believe the change going on in India is bound to shake the two great social tyrannies, caste and the purdah system, to their foundation." All this affords fresh encouragement to Christian women to persevere in their efforts for the regeneration of India.

In India many of the high caste Hindus have become Christians and have wide influence. Non-Christians freely admit the superiority of the Christian character and life. The knowledge of the Christian faith extends far beyond the converts and church circles, and its spirit is gradually permeating the public sentiment. Prominent Hindus have said that Christianity is the coming religion of India. Thus the whole empire feels the stir of a new life. All the missionaries feel that this is a most important period for Christian work, and call for aid for both the evangelistic and the school work. If Christian forces can be brought to bear at this juncture a new India will be before the world.

In the United States the great Presbyterian Church (North) is greatly perplexed at the paucity of students in theology. In the discussion of the matter by their Assembly last week some of the speakers blamed the State University and other undenominational institutions of learning for turning the thoughts of students from religious to commercial currents. "With our four million Presbyterian communicants," said the chairman of the Board of Education, "we have only 117 in training for the ministry. Many colleges are yielding to the feeling against the ministry by putting Greek and Latin in the curricula as elective courses, and many even resent the imposition that they are denominational institutions."

We are in receipt of an advance copy of the programme for the World's Temperance Centennial Congress to be held at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., June 14-23, 1908. The Congress, which is under the direction of a Committee of Promotion consisting of eight well-known temperance men of New York State and an Advisory Committee of forty-one members from all parts of the world, is primarily to do honor to the memory of Dr. Billy J. Clark and others who, on April 30, 1808, one hundred years ago, organized the First Temperance Society in History. This centennial will be made the occasion for a world-wide discussion of the Temperance Question from the standpoints of Sociology, Science, Economics, Legislation and Education. All religious denominations as well as the leading organizations are to send representatives; and there will also be "Sections" given up to Editors, the Anti-Canteen Question, Sunday Schools, Young Men's Christian Association, and other instructive features. Programmes of the Congress may be obtained by addressing Rev. J. H. Durkee, 50 Triangle Bldg., Rochester, N. Y., also Hotel Directories, giving names, locations and prices of Hotels and Boarding Houses at Saratoga Springs.