

judging from the requests for dates, gives promise of being sustained by the same degree of interest. The unanimous approval of this plan, which is but a species of university extension in the Church, demonstrates that in this busy, crowded day the people welcome some such helpful and entertaining method of education. It stirs up the young people and quickens the interest of those who are older in these subjects that lie very close to the life and work of the Church."

Thus by this means 30,000 people received a certain amount of instruction on the subjects treated, and not only instruction, but also intellectual and spiritual quickening whose results it would be difficult fully to estimate. It may be asked, how are ministers, whose time is already occupied to the utmost, to find time to prepare and deliver such lectures? The system could not be very fully adopted in some Presbyteries, but it might, to some extent, be adopted in almost every one. And would it not furnish an excellent and needed stimulus to many ministers to read systematically and perseveringly in certain lines for which they have a taste, if they had an object in view in doing it, such as a course of lectures of the kind referred to would furnish? It could be adapted to any class of subjects, and it appears to suggest a method whereby much needed instruction could be imparted to a large number of our people on subjects connected with our Church, and not suitable for the pulpit, of which they are now wholly ignorant or have only the most partial knowledge, but in which it is of great importance for themselves and for the Church that they should be well grounded. Speaking of different applications of this method of instruction the article from which we have already quoted goes on to say: "This scheme of the Presbytery of St. Paul seems sufficiently practical for wider use. It appeals to all intelligent Christian people as a resource of strength, and the ground for enlarged usefulness in the next generation of Presbyterians. The Church must wake up to some such methods as appeal to men and women who have passed out from under the direct educational influences of their earlier days, if she would form a healthy, productive soil for her good seed. We must do something to foster, in the face of the many obstacles of the day, a generation that can successfully cope with the difficulties the Church is to meet in the future."

THE PRISONERS' AID ASSOCIATION OF CANADA.

FROM the reports of Presbyteries we notice that this Association is bringing its claims before them, for the purpose of obtaining their sympathy and assistance in the work it is seeking to do. Its objects, as stated in their constitution, are: "The reformation of offenders, their welfare when discharged, the prevention of crime and prison reform."

These certainly are such things as must commend themselves to every enlightened citizen, not to say of every Christian, who should be especially sympathetic and ready, after the example of his Master, in helping to seek and save the lost. Some Presbyteries, we observe, take definite and helpful action, and others do nothing more than acknowledge receiving a circular from the Association. Each Presbytery, may of course, be considered the best judge of what is wisest to do within its own bounds, but in the press of business, which Presbyteries have often to attend to and transact in a short time, there is danger of objects, which can be put aside, being passed by without sufficient thought. An Association like that of the Prisoners' Aid is surely well entitled to look for co-operation and assistance from all religious bodies, and ought to receive it. Especially in this case when as now, in all truly enlightened Christian communities, it is coming more and more to be an accepted thing that the Church's duty is concerned, not only with matters of doctrine and teaching, but with all that pertains to the social well-being and improvement of all classes of society. Presbyteries that merely give this the go-by, as if it were a matter in which they have no special interest, and has little or no claim upon them for their time and serious consideration, are certainly making a mistake, even should they resolve they can take no definite action, and they are not in full accord with the spirit of our day, which is more and more calling upon the Church and expecting it to identify itself with all the social ameliorative and philanthropic movements of the time.

The Presbytery of Toronto at its meeting on the 8th inst., set a good example of wise action in this matter by appointing a committee to act in concert with the Prisoners' Aid Association. The Association giving its thought and effort to forward the objects already named, will naturally find in every step taken to secure them, and probably no better way of helping it could be named than by such bodies as Presbyteries co-operating through a committee. This is the least that they can do, and in most cases, we are persuaded, it is also the best thing they can do. We hope that all our Presbyteries may see their way to take at least the step taken by that of Toronto. Others, according as their circumstances have appeared to call for it, have gone a step farther.

In order to enlist the sympathies of our readers in the important objects referred to, and by this means secure for Presbyteries their support in any helpful action they may take, we quote here from a circular of the Association lying before us. It asks for definite action from the Dominion and Ontario Governments, and from County Councils. Let us remember that in seeking to promote these objects we are helping to make society around us purer, better and safer for ourselves and our children to live in; to make our country better; to remove some of the obstacles which stand in the way of the triumph of all that good, which every true minister of the gospel is constantly laboring for.

"From the Dominion Government" it is asking "that the proposed reformatory for young men be not definitely located until a commission shall have reported upon the question in all its bearings. The Association is especially anxious that the Protestant inmates of the proposed reformatory shall have incentives to reformation at least equal to those enjoyed by the prisoners confined in the Central prison, Toronto. The moral and religious instruction of the Protestants in that institution is conducted by the Prisoners' Aid Association, assisted by the Toronto Ministerial Association. This arrangement is found to be much superior to the plan of having a paid prison chaplain. After the men are discharged a helping hand is extended by the Association, practical aid is given and many are helped to a better life.

"From the Ontario Government, the reforms asked for are as follows, viz.: Firstly, The reorganization of the Reformatory for Boys at Penetanguishene, by locating the institution on good farm land so that the boys may be taught farming with a view to their adopting a farm life, and by the introduction of all the best methods that are in use in similar institutions in other countries. It is justly claimed that our common school system is equal if not superior to that of other countries. There is no reason why our reformatory system should not occupy the same proud pre-eminence. Secondly, they are asking for the establishment of one or more reformatories for habitual drunkards. These unfortunates, many of whom now spend more than one half their time in the common jails, and with no benefit to themselves or to anyone else, should at least have an opportunity to reform. The jail does them no good. A reformatory might reform. In jail their labor counts for very little. In a reformatory their labor should go a long way toward making the institution self-sustaining. Moreover the removal of the habitual drunkards from the county jails would very much facilitate the classification of the remaining prisoners.

"From the County Councils the Prisoners' Aid Association is asking for the following reforms, viz.: Firstly, for each county to either establish a county house of refuge or to unite with one or more adjoining counties in establishing a district workhouse. Secondly, to make efficient provision in the county jail for the absolute separation of the young and comparatively innocent from old offenders. Thirdly, to provide the prisoners every working day with industrial employment. Fourthly, to keep the jail supplied with good books. Fifthly, to place a small sum of money in the hands of the jailer to give temporary aid to discharged prisoners. Sixthly, a small annual grant in aid of county prisoners on being discharged from the Central Prison or the Reformatory for women at Toronto.

"From the churches, ministerial, and Y. M. C. Associations, temperance societies, &c., &c., the Prisoners' Aid Association asks for sympathy and co-operation in their efforts for the reformation of offenders, their welfare when discharged, the prevention of crime, and prison reform generally."

Books and Magazines.

THE NEW ACTS OF THE APOSTLES OR THE MARVELS OF MODERN MISSIONS. By Rev. Arthur I. Pierson, D.D. Fleming H. Revell Company, Toronto.

To commend any book of Dr. Pierson's treating of missions will be, to all who know his enthusiastic interest in, and devotion to missions, a work of supererogation. This volume consists of a series of lectures upon the foundation of the "Duff Missionary Lectureship," given in Scotland in 1893. It contains an Introduction by Rev. Andrew Thomson, D.D., F.R.S.E., of Edinburgh, giving a brief statement of the lectureship and the lectures. The subject is treated in five parts as follows: I. "The New Links of Mission History"; II. "The New Apostolic Succession"; III. "The New Visions and Voices"; IV. "The New Converts and Martyrs"; V. "The New Signs and Wonders"; VI. "The New Motives and Incentives." The interesting treatment of the subject carries the reader on from page to page. An index adds much to the value of this work. A chromo-lithographic map showing the prevailing religions of the world, their comparative areas and the progress of evangelization at once both attracts and instructs.

CHRISTIAN CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS; a Concise Account of the Symbolical Books of the Churches and Sects of Christendom and of the Doctrines Dependent on them. Translated from the German of G. A. Gumlich, Ph.D., by I. A. Wheatley. Cloth, 12mo., 136 pp.; \$1.00. New York and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

A brief and convenient handbook on the subjects which this one treats of is sure to be of great use to an increasing number who have not the leisure to read larger works; provided that the work is well and impartially done. That this one is now in its third edition is some evidence that the work has already found acceptance with many. It discusses in Part I. Church Creeds; Part II. Doctrines of the Creeds; Part III. Doctrines of the Most Important Sects. If this little work should lead its readers to seek for fuller and more perfect knowledge, it will answer a good purpose, and, to make the information it gives truly useful, it would need that.

The January *Arena* contains its usual large and varied supply of intellectual food and stimulus of all kinds, dealing especially with very important questions of the day. As frontispiece there is a photograph of the well-known features of H. W. Longfellow followed by an article on the Religion of his Poetry. "Christian Missions in India, as Viewed by an Eastern Scholar," is by Virchand R. Sandhi B.A., and contains sweeping statements and charges hostile to Christian missions which have often been met before, but will need to be met again. B. O. Flower contributes another of an important series of articles on a subject of vital interest, "America's Shame," discusses, in a succession of articles, the "Age of Consent Laws." A number of other papers on subjects of present day interest by able writers complete this number. The *Arena* Publishing Company, Boston, U. S.

The Office and Work of Elders is a sermon lately preached by Rev. Principal MacVicar, D.D., LL.D., on the occasion of the ordination of elders in Crescent Street Church, Montreal, and published by request. The subject is treated under these heads: Elders are, 1, called by God's spirit to this office; 2, called to office by the voice of the people; 3, elders thus called of God and elected by his flock are ordained to office; 4, they are chiefly to rule, to teach and to administer the sacraments. Brief presentations, such as that before us, of this important subject are calculated to be of great service in the Church, because they are read while larger works are not. We wish for this large circulation which it deserves.

The Biblical World should be read by a large number of clergymen for its helpfulness in many ways. The number for this month contains, among other articles, "Sociology and New Testament Study" by the editor. "The Teaching of Jesus," "The Drama in Semitic Literature," "The Originality of the Apocalypse," "Studies in Palestinian Geography," are the leading articles. Comparative Religion notes; Synopses of important articles; Notes and opinions; Book Reviews and other departments well filled make an interesting and useful number. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., U. S.

The *Methodist Magazine* for January is a good number. Its more noteworthy articles are "Oxford and her Colleges," with five illustrations from Professor Goldwin Smith's recent volume on this subject. "Our own Country," illustrated; "Adventures in Greece," also illustrated; "A Methodist Statesman," "Moravian Missions," "Browning's Saul," "The Star in the East," "The House on the Beach," "A Wrecker's Light," "England in the Nineteenth Century." Wm. Briggs, Toronto.

The most recent number of *Manitoba College Journal* contains a notice of the late Rev. Professor R. Y. Thompson, B.D., from the pen of Dr. King, "Evolution and its Connection with Philosophy," the "Life of Longfellow," and "Longfellow's Poetry," "A Plea for Foreign Missions," and the literary and other causerie which are usually to be found in college journals. Manitoba College, Winnipeg, Man.

Queen's College Journal contains, under the head of Editorial, "The Late Premier," "The Library," "A College Song Book," "The Canadian Rugby Union." Under Literature there is "The Myth of Prometheus in Hesiod and Aeschylus." Other departments of the *Journal* are "Contributed," "Communications," "Sports," "College News," "Personals." De Nobis, Queen's College, Kingston, Ont.