

take the founding and support of universities and higher seminaries, if they conduct such institutions in a broad and liberal spirit, they are doing one of the best things possible for the general good. Universities or colleges so created may be ill-endowed and feeble for a time, but they will not remain so. They will keep pace with the progress of the country, and as the American examples are beginning to show, they will at length outstrip both in wealth and influence those institutions which depend upon the support of the State alone. All the great universities of the world (as we have the high authority of Prof. Goldwin Smith for saying) have grown great through successive private benefactions.

So far as the Methodist Church is concerned, both here and in the United States, she has had one definite line of action from the beginning, which is to combine education with the preaching of the Gospel, and to maintain colleges for the training of youth under religious, but not sectarian, influence. It is a noteworthy fact that while several of the Methodist colleges of the United States already have endowments of about a million of dollars each, the last general Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church decided to attempt yet greater things, and to enter upon an energetic movement through the whole Church in 1884 for a centenary fund, the chief portion of which is to be devoted to higher education. Our own general Conference of last September gave prolonged and earnest attention mainly to two subjects, the union of Methodism and higher education. The union is working on towards completion, and in forming a "Basis of Union," the large joint committee unanimously determined to adhere to the past educational policy of Methodism. At the last general Conference our educational society

was placed upon an improved footing, and steps were taken to arouse the whole Church to increased interest and liberality. The plans of the conference have been energetically followed out by the general president and others, and thus far with most encouraging success. This educational society, having important relation to our universities and theological schools, has also, through those institutions, the most vital relation to the general progress and power of Methodism. It has vital relations to our Sunday schools, for these schools require teachers, periodicals, and libraries, in fact a great body of Christian literature and Christian workers. These various helps and appliances must be supplied very largely through the guidance and productive power of our higher seminaries of learning. The educational society has, of course, vital relations to the pulpit, both in the ordinary and in the missionary work. It has important relations to the homes of our people, for their homes will take in a higher character when father and mother have been made to feel in their earlier days the benefit of Christian culture. We should not indulge in narrow, one-sided views of the office and sphere of the Christian Church. The Church of Christ, in the future as in the past, must stand in the centre of all the great intellectual and social forces of the world; working upon the spirit of the age, working through the spirit of the age, wrought upon by the spirit of the age. She must leaven and modify all things secular, or be leavened and modified by them. Her history thus far has generally been an example of both the one and the other. But the struggle for the mastery was never before what it is to-day. New and tremendous forces have come into play. The power of the press, the free and rapid interchange of ideas over the whole earth, and some new theories in