

The Council of Seventy.\*

The Council of Seventy desires to announce a new series of reading courses, to commence October 1, to be conducted by the American Institute of Sacred Literature.

No "times and seasons" will be observed in these ministerial courses. Any one of them may be taken up at any time, pursued in part or to its conclusion, as preferred.

Each course will contain six or more books, selected first by each member of the Council of Seventy, and then by a committee of the Council, who shall from the results of this composite judgment make the final choice.

The books will all be furnished by the Institute. They will be (a) sold at special price, or (b) loaned on a deposited price, which will be returned to the student when the book is returned, less the cost of carriage, and a small per cent. for handling.

Each book sent out will be accompanied by a carefully prepared review covering the following points: (a) an outline of the contents of the book; (b) an estimate of the value of the book as a whole; (c) specific points in which it is open to criticism, or specially worthy of commendation; (d) the names of other authorities on the same subject, with notes upon their special views; (e) a series of questions which should bring out the above points.

In order that, while studying and reading along a special line, the student may keep in touch with the best general current thought in biblical fields, the annual membership fee will entitle him to a year's subscription to the American Journal of Theology or the Biblical World, as he prefers.

The plan is designed to be so flexible that a student wishing to enter upon a course of theological and biblical reading extending over a period of years, and desiring to receive some special direction in this reading, may submit his case to the Institute for such direction.

In conclusion, this scheme will give to the professional Bible student an opportunity (1) to secure a consensus of opinion upon the most important literature on the subjects connected with his work; (2) to obtain temporarily the use of books thus wisely selected; (3) to build up his own library under most competent advisers; (4) to have at hand in his reading a carefully prepared review which he may annotate and keep for future reference; (5) to keep in touch with the best current thought in periodicals, both American and foreign; (6) to secure advice along lines of special reading not in the courses announced; (7) to do all this at a very small annual expense.

The books to be used in the subjects announced above will be selected during the summer. They will be loaned to those applying in the order of their registration. Preliminary announcements and registration blanks may be secured by addressing The American Institute of Sacred Literature, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill.

It is hoped that all ministers seeing this announcement will endeavor to acquaint their fellow-workers with the scheme, and so to bring the opportunity to as large a number as possible. These courses would provide admirable material for the work of ministers' clubs during the winter months.

\*A body of representative biblical teachers which controls and directs the work of the American Institute of Sacred Literature. The direct management of the Institute is entrusted to a Senate composed of the general and special officers of the Council. The list is incomplete, as the enrollment of Councilors is still in progress.

Examination for Ordination.

There are two questions on which the candidate for ordination may well be expected to make a very full statement of his opinions. The logical foundation of religion is the doctrine of the Sources of Religious Truth. The ethical foundation of religion is the doctrine of the Atonement. Examiners may well view with apprehension and alarm the position of a candidate for ordination who does not make a full and clear statement of his views concerning these two doctrines.

What is true concerning his statement of the logical foundation of religion is equally true concerning his statement of what he intends to teach concerning his ethical foundation. A candidate may think he honors the Atonement of the Saviour when he says that he believes it without being able to state it; but Paul and the author of Hebrews were not content to leave it that way.

Our Church.

BY REV. O. P. GIFFORD, D. D.

Not the building, beautiful as that is, but the body, the organization, the membership. A photograph or a prophecy? The real or the ideal? Paul, in his epistles to the churches, spends little time in photography; he gives bare outline sketches of what he finds but glows with hope when writing for the future.

"Still through our paltry stir and strife Glows down the wished ideal; And longing, moulds in clay, what life Carves in the marble real."

What we can be and do, rather than what we are and do, will help us as we face the future.

This church, with its location, on the heights, and its building, a combination of beauty and usefulness, ought to be characterized by "the beauty of holiness." "The King's daughter 'should be' all beautiful within."

The ideal of church life is not social, intellectual, nor financial, but spiritual. "My house shall be called a house of prayer." The astronomical observatory is fitted for the study of the stars; the knowledge thus gained is used on the high seas. The stars in their courses control the commerce of the world. The church building is a sort of spiritual observatory; the knowledge gained guides upon the sea of life. "Jesus, Saviour, pilot me," is not only good poetry but a sensible prayer.

The church organization is simply a body of folk banded together for the development of spiritual apprehension and cultivation of spiritual life. Where men and women are gathered together in the name of Christ, there he is. A clear idea of the purpose of church organization is the first condition of profiting.

If there must be a choice, let us be an inspirational

rather than an institutional church. Inspired men have power to serve in any place or in any capacity.

Every member of the church should be a diligent student of the Bible. This is our text book in the school of Christ. Every member should be present at all possible services, and in time; tardiness and truancy are poor preparations for spiritual culture.

The prayer meeting is quite as essential to spiritual growth as the Sunday service. Your covenant with Christ and the church includes the prayer meeting.

The Sunday School ought to be the church studying God's Word in classes. If you are ignorant, come and be taught; if you are fitted, come and teach. There are but two classes of people in the church; those who ought to be taught, and those who ought to be teaching.

Possessed of spiritual life yourself, you ought to share it with others. "I believe in the communion of saints." "They that feared the Lord spake often to one another." Those who have, ought to impart to those who have not. The "meeting-house," as our fathers quaintly called the building, is for the meeting of Christians with each other, and of Christians with unbelievers. The Lord harkens to those who speak to one another in their fear of him.

"The field is the world." Every member of the church should be interested in the city, the state, the world, as an opportunity for service. Sell your microscope, stop magnifying the insects on your farm; buy a telescope, let the uttermost parts of the earth be the horizon of your thought and knowledge. Christ is our force; the world is our field. Set apart some portion of each day for Bible study and prayer. Your usefulness as a Christian will depend upon your spiritual power, and that upon your nearness to God.

The body grows by that which every joint supplies; the church grows by that which each member contributes. Be not sponges, but joints, each in his place, each doing his share. Let us take as our motto "Saved to Serve." —Standard.

"While it is Yet Day."

BY IDA REED SMITH.

In a certain church, which shall be nameless—it is a real church, though, and the incident I am about to relate actually happened—there is a dear old saint, who by his love for the services of God's house, and his regularity in attending them, preaches every week a sermon as effective as any his pastor delivers. Sunday morning, and Sunday evening as well, he is in his place in one of the front pews. He is a member of the Bible class, whose presence and interest the teacher can depend on. He is an honored and cherished member of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, and his serene presence and gentle voice are a benediction to the eager, restless young lives he touches there.

The faithful ones at the mid-week prayer meeting listen with respectful and loving attention to the testimony of one who, for nearly seventy years, has proved true God's gracious promises. He recognizes no peculiarities of weather. Clear or stormy, cold or warm, wet or dry, it is the Lord's sending, but not meant to keep him from His house. His faithfulness is a beautiful object lesson to all who know him, strengthening with its own strength the weaker devotion of his brethren.

Not long ago he was eighty-three years old, and the superintendent of the Sunday School, a wise and kindly man, who believes in the doctrine of showing appreciation while it is still of worth to its object, planned a little surprise in his honor. The school was opened in the usual way, but, when the little people of the primary department started to march to their room, they halted by the way in front of the Bible-class. Then, as the superintendent gave the signal for the school to rise, a tiny boy carrying a big ribbon-tied bunch of roses, stepped forward, and, in a few simple, childish words, told the white-haired man how glad the children were that he had been so long with them, and that they hoped he would be with them for many years to come. As the child handed him the lovely flowers, a hundred snowy handkerchiefs fluttered the beautiful "Chautauque salute," while tears of tender feeling sparkled like jewels in the eyes of the older "children," pastor and people, who felt that they could say "Amen and Amen" to every word of the loving little speech.

"I didn't know they loved me so much," said the gentle old man afterwards; "but I'm very glad—very glad!"

Ah, the "very gladness" of the aged! What a precious, sacred thing it is! But do we do all in our power to bring it to their hearts? We know "the night cometh," when all our tributes of affection will be powerless to reach those gone beyond it into the eternal morning. So let the love-light shine brightly on this side of the shadows. Let us show our tenderness "while it is yet day."—Sunday School Times.

Is it fair, always to forget all the good, or kindness, shown to us, by those with whom we live, for the sake of one little pain they may have caused us, and which, most likely, was quite unintentional on their part?