

A STATEMENT
IN REGARD TO THE
Objects and Purposes
OF THE
School for Christian Workers,
SPRINGFIELD, MASS

From The Springfield Union of Sept. 19, 1885.

In response to your request for a statement in regard to the object and purpose of the School for Christian Workers in this city, which shall at once set forth the important facts relating to the school and its work and answer criticisms and objections that are likely to prove misleading, I submit the following:

In the first place let me repeat what we have tried to state clearly from the beginning, that this school is in no sense a short cut to the ministry. It in no way interferes with the work of the theological seminaries. Indeed, some

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of our very best testimonials as to the need of this school are from theological professors. It only proposes to train laymen for lay work and there is no more reason why any man who goes from this school should desire to be a pastor and preacher than that a Christian lawyer or physician, who has literary ability and experience in Christian work, should go from the law, or medical school, into the regular ministry.

I desire to state the case by answering three questions which, I think, will explain the design of the school and answer all the objections and criticisms which have been offered. 1. Are there definite lines of work for laymen, demanding a special training? 2. Are there laymen in the country with natural ability who will dedicate themselves to this work and take this training? 3. Can these men be trained for this work?

The Call for Trained Laymen for Religious Work.

My answer to the first question is, that there are nine hundred and twenty-nine

Young Men's Christian associations in this country alone, and the number is increasing rapidly every year. About 300 of these associations employ one or more men as secretaries, who devote their whole time to work for young men, and who are paid a regular salary. These associations are also increasing rapidly in foreign countries, and as the methods of work employed in this land are considered to be the best, arrangements are already being made to send men here from these foreign associations to learn our methods of work.

The international committee want five men per month this year to fill positions as secretaries in this country. Now there is perhaps no profession in which such varied and peculiar qualifications are needed to insure success. Besides tact and common sense secretaries should have at least a fair general education, should be able to teach the Bible, to lead in singing, to direct in the gymnasium, and if there is no regular instructor, to fit some one for that position. They should know the very best methods for reaching and holding young men, and how

to organize and direct and use these methods, They should know how to study men and detect their great needs. They should have spiritual power. They should know certain business principles in order to conduct the financial affairs of the association. They should know much of the history of Christianity and understand the lives of eminent Christian men in order that they may be encouraged in their difficult work. There is no school for the training of these young men, and if there were no other lines of work asking for trained laymen, the Young Men's Christian associations alone need this school. But the demand for pastors' helpers in our larger cities is also very great. The mission work especially requires laymen with most, if not all, of the qualifications of the Young Men's Christian associations, men who are not obliged to write sermons nor spend their time with the duties peculiar only to the ministry, but who can devote all their time to practical or personal, as distinct from literary or pulpit work. A gentleman, who has been studying

The Problem of Mission Work

In our large cities, says that he believes the masses will only be reached and helped successfully by hand to hand work and that trained laymen are best calculated to do this. These men will also be specially trained for Sunday school work, which requires much time. Statistics show that there are hundreds of thousands of children in this land out of the Sunday school and outside of all religious influences. These might be gathered in by the personal work or under the direction of these trained men and all the work of the Sunday school be made more effective. Already positions have been offered for more than one hundred men trained to be pastors' helpers. The secretary of one of our denominational societies who knows the needs of the country, told me this summer that we would not be able to meet the increasing demand for pastors' helpers. Then we have had requests for men to go West and work as Sunday school missionaries or colporteurs, and a call has come from Canada for trained laymen to work among the fishermen of Nova Scotia.

These facts certainly answer the first question. There are three or four lines of Christian work definite and distinct, in which laymen qualified, are greatly needed, lines which in no way interfere with the regular ministry, but which supplement the work of the ministry, and as a teacher, or mechanic, or lawyer, or physician, or business man or minister, is better qualified to do his work, other things being equal because of special training for it, so these men will do better work when specially trained. Why have some churches established high grade preparatory schools and colleges and theological seminaries, when in their first history men were put into the regular ministry who had natural ability, whether educated or not? Because experience shows that ordinarily men with natural ability, who are specially trained, will do better work than those who are not trained.

Laymen Ready for Training and for Work.

2. Are there men of natural ability in the country who will give their life to this work and take this training? Yes. Our correspondence shows that there are scores of

earnest, able young men who are eager to give themselves to this work, who have been developed somewhat in the churches or Young Men's Christian associations, who long for more knowledge and instruction in practical work, that they may be better workmen. Four hundred and thirty-nine young men have, in less than twenty months, offered themselves for association work alone, to the international committee, but only those who were the most promising could be taken, and many of these have failed for lack of training. A large number of men with natural ability but little or no training or experience were rejected, when if they had been able to get the necessary knowledge and training they might have become successful secretaries. But there was no school in which to get this special training. There is no lack of men, and if the class of '88 enters the school in the same proportion to the applications received with the class which has now entered, every room in the new building now being erected, will be taken next fall.

The Training Which the School Will Give.

3. Can these men be trained for this work? The course of study and practice arranged for this school covers all of the requisites mentioned above as specially necessary for this work. I give the outline of the course, which takes two years: Bible history and systematic Bible truth, the evidences of Christianity, the history of Christianity, Christian missions, Christian ethics, the history, literature and methods of the Young Men's Christian associations, the Sunday school, the prayer meeting and its methods, the special work of the inquiry room, the lives of eminent and successful Christian workers, outlines of history and rhetoric, elocution, composition, rules for deliberative bodies, vocal music and gymnastics. Besides the corps of regular daily instructors there are a number of men eminent in their fields of labor, such as Mr. Moody, Rev. Dr. Gordon, Messrs. McBurney, Morse and Wishard and other Christian association men, Rev. Dr. Vincent, Rev. Dr. Pentecost and Prof. Riddle of Hartford, who will meet the students during the year and give them all

the inspiration and help they can from their accumulated knowledge and ripe experience. The men will also have practical work in the churches and Young Men's Christian associations in the city during their entire stay here, as the rules of the school require that each student shall unite with and work with some church of his own denomination. In order to afford them larger experience, those who go into association work will be placed with successful secretaries in other cities during the vacations, while arrangements have also been made to afford the same opportunities to those who enter the other lines of work. I might add here that before any man is received his case is thoroughly investigated as to his qualifications for the work, the same sifting process being used as that employed by Bradstreet's commercial agency.

In Conclusion.

These facts certainly answer the three great questions in which the success of this enterprise is involved. All other questions than those based on these questions it

would seem are not worthy of more attention here than in considering any other educational or business enterprise. There is a pressing demand for laymen, specially trained for these special lines of lay work. There are many laymen anxious to be trained. This school is established to help them get this training, and we sincerely desire the prayers and help of all who are interested in aggressive Christian work.

The following with regard to Mr. J. T. Bowne, who has come from another field to devote his life in the school as the head of the Young Men's Christian association department, is from four of the most widely known and most successful Christian association workers in the world.

NEW YORK, June 11, 1885. We have considered very carefully the whole plan of the School for Christian Workers; established in Springfield for the training of men to be secretaries of Young Men's Christian associations and helpers to pastors.

Mr. J. T. Bowne, one of the secretaries of the international committee, has resigned, in order to accept the position as head of the department of the Young Men's Christian association in this school. He has gained the experience needed for his new position by his long and

active connection with the sectarial department of the Young Men's Christian associations; and we believe him to be thoroughly competent for this work, and think the school exceedingly fortunate in having secured him, for he has been for years practically engaged in training young men for the secretaryship.

We heartily commend this department of the School for Christian Workers to the sympathy and help of all who are interested in the Young Men's Christian association. The highest qualifications and the best training are needed for the secretaryship, and we believe that this school will greatly contribute toward supplying this most urgent and pressing need.

H. M. MOORE, RICHARD C. MORSE,
RUSSELL STURGIS, JR., R. R. MCBURNEY.

Accept my thanks for your courtesy in allowing me space to state these facts and thus secure for our school and its work a more thorough understanding and recognition on the part of the general public.

DAVID ALLEN REED.

Springfield, September 19,