

## BY WAY OF WELCOME\*

GORDON H. CLARK

**W**ITH a personal pleasure that may properly be called keen, I welcome you to this Annual Conference. This, however, is but a fractional amount of your welcome. The four Philadelphia groups and each individual in them feel as I do, and wish to extend to you welcome and hospitality to the limit of their power. We therefore welcome you heartily. We fully expect to enjoy ourselves, but this welcome is primarily and more intensively a welcome to work.

We have several things to do. It is fitting to commence our sessions by prayer and so to emphasize the devotional aspects of the League. We must endeavor to sustain and to enrich our filial relation to the Sovereign of the universe. Companionship or communion with Him is a privilege highly to be esteemed. And we have also, in view of the condition of the church and the purpose of the League, petitions to present and blessings to request. In a moment we shall enter our period of prayer.

Secondly, we must attend to the propagation of the Faith. Sometimes, in discouragement, we doubt that the fields are white to the harvest; we know well enough that the laborers are few. Forgetting our discouragement, placing our trust in God, we must work all the harder to gather in the sheaves. Every part of the world offers a missionary possibility. At last year's Conference a Missionary Department was suggested. In 1928 a definite policy of evangelism was urged. China needs Christ's witnesses—so do the colleges. Unless we preach the gospel of redeeming love to the salvation of our fellow men, we have failed—woefully.

Still, our task is not completed. Our predecessors preached the gospel and the church has become largely modernistic. Why? There may be many reasons, but I feel sure that one is that in preaching the Gospels they were lax in teaching the Epistles. This one fact impresses me tremendously: the officers of our churches cannot well distinguish between truth and error. They do not seem to keep clearly in mind just what Christianity is. They may be and largely are pious, devoted and indeed redeemed, but, though it be the inexperienced judgment of a young man, I fear they are ignorant. If we limit our activities to evangelism in the narrower sense, we shall soon have no leaders. The church never has existed nor ever can exist without leaders. Is it to have good ones or bad ones? We are under obligation, so it seems to me, to insist on an intellectual standard that will evoke the respect, if not the sympathy of those who oppose us. And we must win both respect and approval from those who do not yet oppose us, especially those college students who happen to be serious and who want to compare two antagonistic philosophies. We hope that progress to this end will come from this Convention; progress toward an intellectual leadership, without forgetting evangelism, or neglecting devotions—of which there is no fear. And so a hearty welcome to a real good time, a serious welcome to definite work.

\**The Address of Welcome to the Sixth Annual Convention.*