

Westward to the East

Mr. B. Pressley Smith, Business Manager of the seminary, in the summer of 1905 had asked me if I would not in my senior year assist for four hours a day in managing the heating plant of the seminary. This would mean that I would stay in the heating plant basement from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. and work for ten cents an hour, twenty-eight hours a week, in exchange for my room and board. I agreed. It gave me considerable time to read by such lights as we had in the basement. That was the way I was able to read such great books as Victor Hugo's Les Miserables and other books.

But Mr. Smith was a good man as well as a good business man, and when Thanksgiving Time came he some-how managed to let me off for about four days to enable me to make a very important trip to Alabama. I wanted to see my mother whom I had not seen in more than one year, and who had moved from the Old Home and was living at Hollywood with my brother Gideon P. Bouldin. The trip could include also a visit to Mr. Hampton's house at Meridianville, Alabama, to see a young school teacher whom I had not seen for three and a half years:- not since we had taken that buggy ride "To within sight of Belvidere" in early summer 1902. It was at this time and place that the important answer was given-the answer that I had been waiting for a long time, and the answer that made possible a united life-move to the East by way of the West.

It was in this same winter, at the end of January 1906 that I signed and sent to Richmond Virginia my application to the Foreign Mission Board S. B. C. to be sent as a missionary to Japan, and it was in mid-April of the same year that Mr. Smith again gave me a few days to "go before the Board" at Richmond. When I got off the train at Richmond on April 17 there was the Big Secretary, Dr. R. J. Willingham to meet me. I was not prepared for one thing that this Patriarch did--he insisted on taking my suitcase from the train to the cab as he led me to a hotel. Before leaving me at the hotel he reached for a sheet of paper and a writing instrument. He said "The Board can't meet until the day after tomorrow. Spend tomorrow seeing Washington" and he drew and gave to me a map showing all the things I ought to see, the Washington Monument, the Library of Congress, the Capitol Building, the Smithsonian Institute, the White House, et cetera, et cetera, a real days' work for a young man. I did what he said on April 18, 1906 the day San Francisco was destroyed by an earth quake.

When I told Dr. Willingham about my ^apassing through the portico of the White House he said "Why didn't you go in and speak to the President (Theodore Roosevelt) and tell him where you were going"? I said I supposed he would be too busy to see me.

The next day, April 19, 1906 I went before the Board, told them my story, and was appointed a missionary to the Land of the Rising Sun. We have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels.