President Harper.

Dear Sir,

As from a very exceptional and perhaps unparalleled point of observation, you are looking everywhere for helpful suggestions in the interest of the new Chicago University, may I beg your consideration of some thoughts which have been brewing in my mind for a number of years.

But, first, an introduction, though it is awkward to introduce oneself. Mr. F. B. Rambidge, graduate of Rochester University and Theological Seminary; ten years Pastor of Central Baptist, Providence; several years Superintendent of Union City Mission Society of Brooklyn; and Pastor now of Delaware Avenue Baptist Church of this city, whose debt of $20,000 has been paid off this month.

In repeated visits to Asia, I have been much of foreign missions, indeed made special study of comparative religions in nearly all lands, met over 1,000 missionaries of all denominations at their work, published three books upon the subject, and addressed more than 1,000 churches in our country in aid of foreign, home and city missions.

But really, after all, this is not my special hobby, though it is on this line I wish to write to you.
The study of missions at home and abroad for many years has been secondary to a love of archaeological work in Bible lands, which has led me to much research here (especially Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria) etc. But never mind that: my point is that I have no axe of my own to grind in urging upon your attention a Professorship, or at least an extended Lectureship on Christian Missions, as an immediate and prominent department in the Chicago University. If I were addressing you on the other subject above, proposing a department with collections of Biblical archaeology, I could not perhaps be so disinterested, but in this I may sincerely ask you to understand me as writing only in the interest of education.

The time is ripe for a decided advance on the whole subject of Christian Missions. The epoch of superficial story-telling on the part of missionaries, mission agents, and “globe-trotters” has passed. A great mass of facts has been gathered, both from heathen, Moslem and pagan lands, and from home mission fields and our huge municipal centers of unreached populations,
and the time has come for the handling of these facts in a truly scientific spirit. I have thought of such enterprise as properly forming a department in theological seminary instruction, quite comparable for importance with church history. But there are so many secular phases to the great subject, in the lines of philological, ethnological, geographical, and of other purely scientific inquiries, the whole subject assumes in my mind the place of a department in a real university. We have only scratched the surface yet of comparative religions, with their underlying moral philosophies, as for example the Hsing-Shang underlying the Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism of China.

So impressed have I been with this conviction, that I feel ashamed of the books above mentioned, though they have passed through several editions, and have been very favorably received. They are merely story-books of travel. Are they all that a man of at least average intelligence and education has to say on the subject of Christian missions, from world-wide observation, in this day when Christian missions should be considered a great and grandly unfolding science, full of general educational opportunity, of moral power, and of religious culture?
God sparing my life, I hope some day to contribute something of value in this direction. I enclose you a prospectus of a textbook for university instruction, which (i.e., manuscript of the book itself) I have written and just in quark.

At my venture on the title—The Science of Christian Mission, although Professor Christlieb of Bonn, as you may remember, thought fifteen years ago that the necessary material had not yet been collected for such systematic comparison as is required for the construction of a science. But, then, there has been a great advance in the last fifteen years. I plan to work my manuscript over again two or three times, with intervals of two or three years, and then it may be serviceable in some of our higher centers of Christian learning.

While in profound sympathy with our foreign work centering in Boston, I cannot but lament certain deficiencies which are behind the times, behind, for example, some of the leadership and editorial work in the Presbyterian Church, as which deficiencies account in part for this year's deficit of $65,000. Our home mission work, centering in New York, while more enterprising, shows the need of better Evangelistic education among our leading ministry and laity.
And when you survey our Baptist Mission work as also largely that of other denominations, in our greatest cities, what more obvious than that many problems meet the study and instruction of specialists, and that here also is a field which Chicago University, Mr. Rockefeller and President Harper should cultivate?

O, I could write all day on this subject, but this must be only a letter.

Do establish a Department of Christian Missions in your University.

At least have an extended Lectureship.

Arrange for an illustrative collection of the religions, languages; moral and social and intellectual conditions of the various populations in the world, together with a corresponding library. Would not Mr. Rockefeller think so favorably of this, as to devote a few thousand dollars to a professorship, enabling the instructor to spend his time until the opening of the University, or a few months later, in taking a flying trip especially to Japan, China and India, and gathering an instructive Museum of Christian Missions? I know no thing could be done, grandly and profitably at a very limited expense. In travelling around
The world, and repeatedly to Asia, I have done a little of this with a small amount of money. Of course many times I had to deny myself valuable additions to my own collection from lack of funds. But I could see that the time is now for the economical gathering of materials for a complete Museum of Christian Missions. Your Professor could ship boxes by sailing vessels as I did from the various countries, and this freight was very small. Then the last time I went to Asia, I represented to Messrs. Dillon, Huntington, and a few other N. Y. and S. S. magnates, that I was to make a special tour of missions, and they secured me 1/2 to 1/2 a statement everywhere throughout the world, except on the Mituk Bashi S.S. Line of Japan. Your Professor of Christian Missions on this trip outfit tour could probably do the same.

Allow me please to supply and a few words from my correspondents regarding enclosed confederate of New York, which I wish herewith to use merely in stimulating you to the proposed instruction.

Bishop Clark of R.I.: "Very timely and important."
Professor at Princeton = "Our faculty are ac-
pallitate fully of...long recognized the necessity of more
through treatment of the great subject."

Pres. Hovey of Newton = "Of very great interest.
for several years I have been thinking of the need."

Dr. Broderick of Ky. = "Much impressed
with the plan."

Dr. Northrup of Chicago = "Wonderfully compe-
tensive and suggestive."

Pres. Strong of Rochester = "There can be no
doubt of the value of such a course."

Dr. Crane of Concord = "A field of
broadest and richest promise."

Dr. Murdock of Mts. Union = "Indispensable."

Pres. Seelze of Amherst = "Grew it...great utility."

Late Pres. Dodge = "A good thing...go on."

Dr. E. G. Robinson = "Undoubtedly of service
in helping to an intelligent study of a vast
amount of facts."

Very Truly Yours,

Mr. F. Bainbridge.
Having written so long a letter, and copied so fully a table of contents, I will not bore you with proposed additional points in rewriting manuscript. My purpose chiefly is to bring the Mission forward.

If the time should come for a Department of instruction on Bible lands, together with a corresponding collection of their archaeology, topography, natural productions, etc., etc., with working library on Egyptology, Assyriology, etc. I might be glad to lend a hand, why do not Mr. Rockefeller and you commission some qualified person to equip a Department of Bible Lands in the University, and in it to give a course in Bible lands two or three years hence? It would take that time for the preparation of thorough equipment. He needs a winter in Egypt, with a much longer course of gathering for a Department of Christian Missions. He should have there, as also in various places in Europe, casts, impressions, pictures, and drawings made of what he wants and cannot purchase. Then the next year he should be in Jerusalem, Babylon, Nineveh, etc. at centres. I know there is much else of value in the vallies of the Esdraelon and Tigris to be excavated. This is not merely presumption, but what I have had abundant proof of upon the ground. There are two or three specialists in the East, whose services as assistants for a few months should be secured. Money is also required for Turkish permits as also for common laborers. Surely you especially must be an enthusiast in this department and will as quickly as possible make it very prominent in the Chicago University, unequalled for its facilities in America.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

Mr. F. B.