

In Memory of Rev. J. H. Rowe

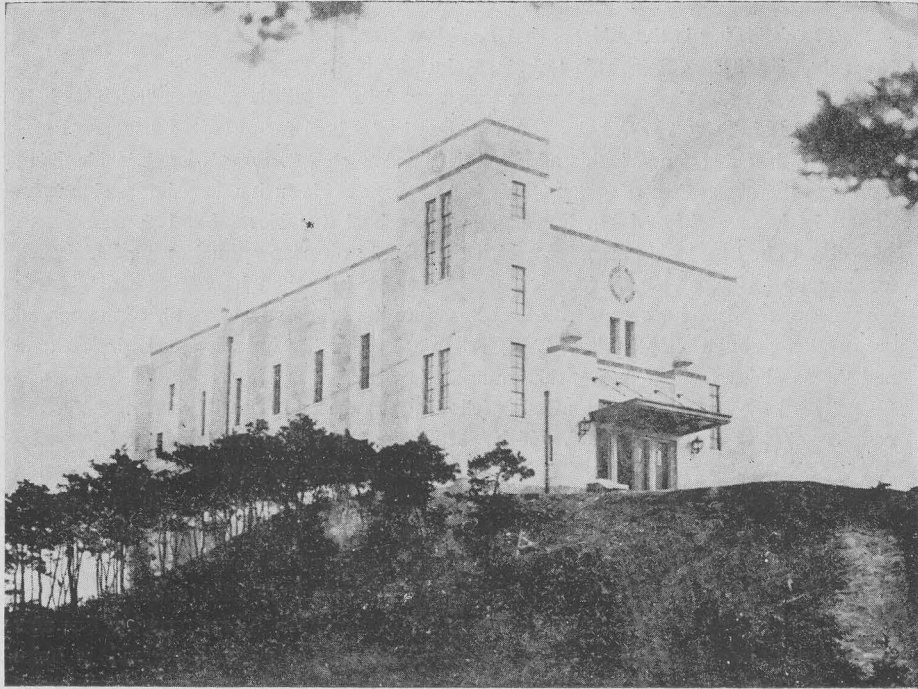
The following is the address that President Hara delivered on Rowe Memorial Day, November 12, 1938, at Seinan Jo Gakuin, Kokura, Japan.

Since Mr. Rowe's death nine years ago, a special evangelistic meeting has been held every autumn in Seinan Jo Gakuin, Southern Baptists' school for girls in Japan. As President Hara has mentioned in his address, the burden on Mr. Rowe's heart in his dying hour was the evangelism of Japan. This last message made such a deep impression upon those who knew and loved Mr. Rowe here at the school that November 12th was chosen as a day to be kept in his memory, which day should open an annual evangelistic week for the school of which he was founder. Every year has brought a harvest of souls. Lives are reconsecrated and scores of souls are born into the Kingdom as a result of the careful preparation through chapel talks, Y. W. A. meetings, and prayers for weeks beforehand and the special preaching during this evangelistic week.

This year at the alumnae meeting following the special memorial service, the young women voted to make next year, which will be the tenth anniversary, a special one by inviting Mrs. Rowe and her daughter, Mary Elizabeth, who are now residing in California to come to Japan in the autumn and be here for the occasion. Students, graduates, teachers and parents of Seinan have begun to raise funds for their travel to and from Japan.

Another decision made at the graduates' meeting was to investigate the possibility of removing Mr. Rowe's grave from Yokohama to Kokura. As Mr. Rowe died at Gotenba, he was laid to rest in the foreign cemetery at Yokohama which was near by. But now that there is a burial ground on the Seinan campus, Mr. Rowe's Japanese friends in Kokura are very anxious that his grave shall be beside that of Mr. C. K. Dozier who was buried

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Rowe Memorial Chapel

on this campus five years ago.

A third decision made at the alumnae meeting was to plan for a special graduates' reunion to which young women will come from all parts of Japan and possibly a few from Korea, Manchukuo and China.

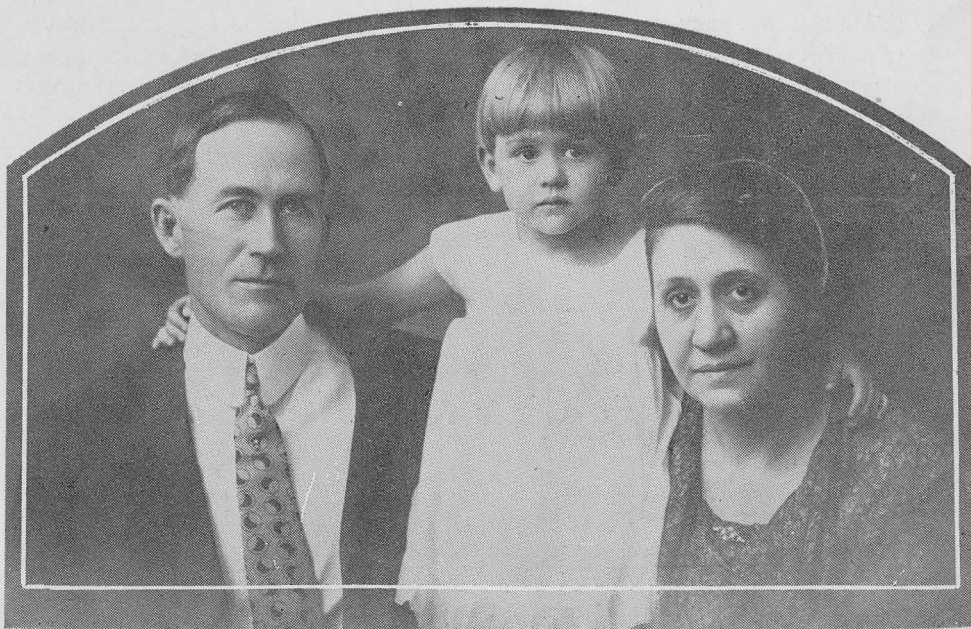
The prayers of Southern Baptist friends everywhere are earnestly solicited for next year's evangelistic week and for all our efforts in the evangelization of Seinan Jo Gakuin and Japan during the coming year.

Cecile Lancaster
Kokura, Japan
December, 1938

Pres. Hara's Address

Nine years and three months have passed since our beloved Mr. Rowe passed away. He died in 1929. The summer of that year was the first that he had taken for a vacation in several years. Usually he had stayed through the heat of the summer, giving some of his time and efforts to the school, and much to the development of the churches in the six cities of this district. He had planned to take his family to Gotenba at the foot of Mt. Fuji for the month of August. The night before they were to leave, a telegram came asking his help for the church in Wakamatsu. We are told that Mrs. Rowe said to him: "Please

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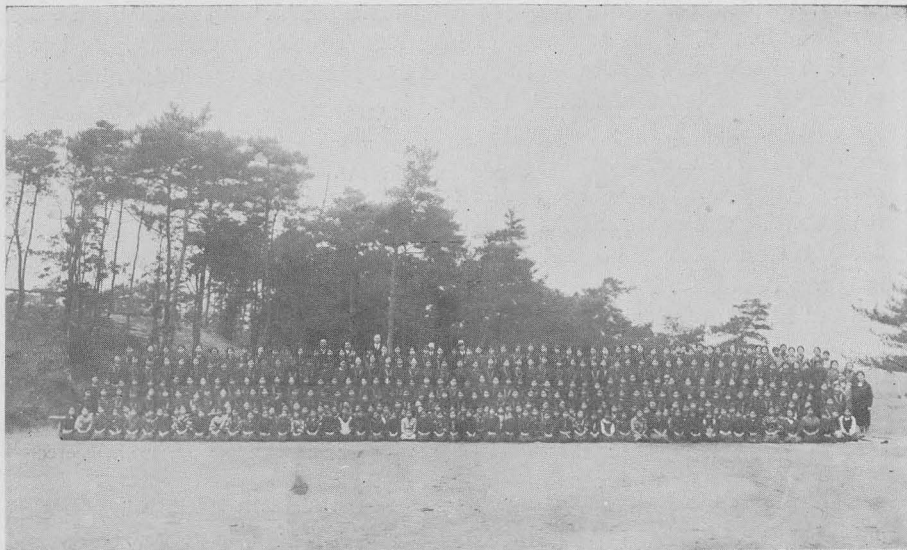
Rev. J. H. Rowe, Mrs. Rowe and Mary Elizabeth

do not try to make the trip to Wakamatsu. You are not well, and it is so hot and so late. Wait and settle the matter by correspondence from Gotenba." But with characteristic self-denial he said, "I could not rest if I left with this problem unsettled". And so he went. The conference lasted until late, and he returned home after midnight, having had to walk several miles, as the cars had stopped running.

At Gotenba Mr. Rowe continued to disregard his fatigue and presided at the annual conference of the missionaries. With the burden of North Kyushu still on his heart, he requested Miss Schell to tell of her plan for beginning Good Will Center work. He thus led the conference that designated Tobata as the place to open the first Good Will Center. This was the last item of business attended to during that morning session. When the body assembled in the afternoon, Mrs. Rowe brought the message that Mr. Rowe was ill and that he had requested that the meeting be finished without him. Mr. Rowe himself was convinced that from the first he would not recover, and was gravely concerned for the future of the work.

After a few days of intense suffering he was called to rest on August 12, 1929. His last audible words were "the Evangelistic Work". This shows us how his heart was burning with passion for lost souls.

Mr. Rowe's love for people, especially the people of Japan was equally strong. I remember on one occasion that he said to the Seinan girls: "If my heart should be opened at my death, 'Japan' would be found inscribed there because I have loved her so much since my younger days". An incident which happened soon after the founding of Seinan in 1922 will show this love for people. As it was such fine weather, all the girls had come



Last Student Body Under Rev. Rowe's Leadership

to school without umbrellas and raincoats. However, about noon a heavy rain came and it was soon evident that there was no hope of it letting up by the closing hour of school. As I was anxiously considering what could be done, Mr. Rowe came to talk about the matter. At that time there were only four men in the school; namely, an elderly clerk in the school office, the janitor who was quite old also, Mr. Rowe and I. So I said, "The only thing possible is for you and me to go down to the city, buy some umbrellas, and get back by three o'clock". "Let's go", he said. After a bit we were in Kokura. We bought all the cheap umbrellas one shop had in stock, each shouldered a big bundle, and started home. After leaving the street car, we ran across a rice field and up the steep hill in the pouring rain. We were both soaking wet; so hurriedly giving directions to the lady teachers, I hurried home to change into dry clothes, feeling that I had done a noble deed. But afterwards I heard from the girls that Mr. Rowe, without waiting to change had made two or three trips to the car line to take girls who were still without umbrellas. How much stronger and deeper was his love than mine!

Mr. Rowe also showed his love for the Japanese people when he joined with teachers and students in participating in memorial ceremonies by bowing to the monument erected to Japanese soldiers killed in battle. For many American missionaries, this is a difficult problem for it seems to them a breach of faith to their God in heaven. But Mr. Rowe understood it as an expression of patriotism and knew how the Japanese people sincerely love to bow before the soldiers' monument on Memorial Day. I remember his spirit and great love for our country to the point of tears.

One of the greatest pleasures I had while visiting America in 1937 was the opportunity



Seinan Faculty at Time of Rev. Rowe's Death

of making a pilgrimage to Mr. Rowe's birthplace. Oh, what a country village Achilles is ! No bus nor taxi goes there, so it was only by the gracious kindness of Mr. Coleman (the brother of Miss Coleman who visited Seinan in 1936) that I could get to this out of the way place. None of Mr. Rowe's brothers received college education as he did. All of them are either farmers or business men. The people of Achilles do not say " Mr. John Rowe ", but " Dr. John Rowe of Japan ". Even these few facts are enough to convince us that it was God who chose Mr. Rowe as His vessel, and filled him for service. I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Boatright, the President of Richmond University from which Mr. Rowe was graduated. Dr. Boatright had known Mr. Rowe well. His judgment was that Mr. Rowe was not such a brilliant student but that he was a most honest and sincere character. This confirmed my own impression that it was Mr. Rowe's personality and devotion that made him the great man that he was. Mental brilliancy is largely due to inheritance, but sincerity and faithfulness must be cultivated by one's own effort and will power. Even as a student, Mr. Rowe had impressed his school president with his sterling character, which is a proof of God's grace and election in choosing Mr. Rowe for his great work in Japan.

Such is the character of the man who founded our Seinan Jo Gakuin. By God's own commission, Mr. Rowe became a pillar of our institution, and each one of us whether teacher or student is called upon to make a fitting contribution to the spirit of the school. To our great joy, the institution is growing and improving year by year. For this we are indebted to many people for their services, direct and indirect. But the first cause of this happy development is the excellent seed that was sown in the beginning. And this " seed "



Rev. Rowe and His Graduating Class at Richmond University

is the character of Mr. Rowe. We should inscribe this fact upon our hearts and we must be thankful both to Mr. Rowe and to the Southern Baptist brothers and sisters in America who sent him to Japan to establish this school.

In closing my talk I want to mention three lessons that I believe we can learn from Mr. Rowe's life. First, he is an example in true faith.

I don't know how old Mr. Rowe was when he gave his heart to Christ. Nor do I know just when he felt God's call to special service and volunteered for Japan. However, I am sure that these decisions were reached while he was still very young. And more than that, I feel confident that when in his early years Mr. Rowe felt God's call to follow Christ and later to offer his life in special service, he answered these calls promptly and without argument. He willingly trusted his future to God and resolutely turned his face toward Japan.

Another illustration of Mr. Rowe's undaunting faith was his conviction that God will provide for His work and that He will guide His children as they endeavor to carry on according to His leading.

There was a period in the life of this school when Mr. Rowe and all his co-workers were put to the test. The date for the opening of the new school year was near at hand and the money that had been promised for necessary class rooms that had to be built before a new Freshman class could enter, had not come. Mr. Rowe was at a loss to know what to do. However, in the midst of all his anxiety he never lost his faith in God's great providence. He would say to me, "God loves this school more than you or I. It was established by His own hand. We may not see how, but in some way God will give us



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Gymnasium and Class Room Buildings

these necessary class rooms ". And sure enough, the money came, and in a most unexpected manner. But it came in time for the much needed class room building.

Truly from Mr. Rowe 's example of complete surrender and absolute dependence in a living and controlling God, we can learn a great lesson.

The second thing that I want us to remember about Mr. Rowe is his example in true patriotism. Though he was an American, Mr. Rowe loved Japan as his own country. He lived, toiled and died in Japan. His remains are resting in this country, today. Recently, Prince Higashikuni no Miya who participated in the capture of Hankow, having seen the conditions in China and the sacrificial work of hundreds of English and American missionaries who have lived and died for the people of that country, was heard to remark, "We Japanese must do the same that these missionaries have done if we are to win the friendship of China ". I am thankful for the Prince's keen observation and his interpretation of the situation. As we all know, the " long term reconstruction of China " is Japan's motto in the present struggle, and if this aim is to be achieved, some of us Japanese must be willing to live, die and be buried in China as the foreign missionaries have done. And who should be better able to love Korea, Manchukuo, and China than students of Seinan whose founder loved Japan, toiled for Japan, died in Japan, and was buried in Japan. Though we are weak, yet by the grace of God, shall we not pray that we may become international patriots. This is expected of Seinan Jogakuin daughters, both by God and their country.

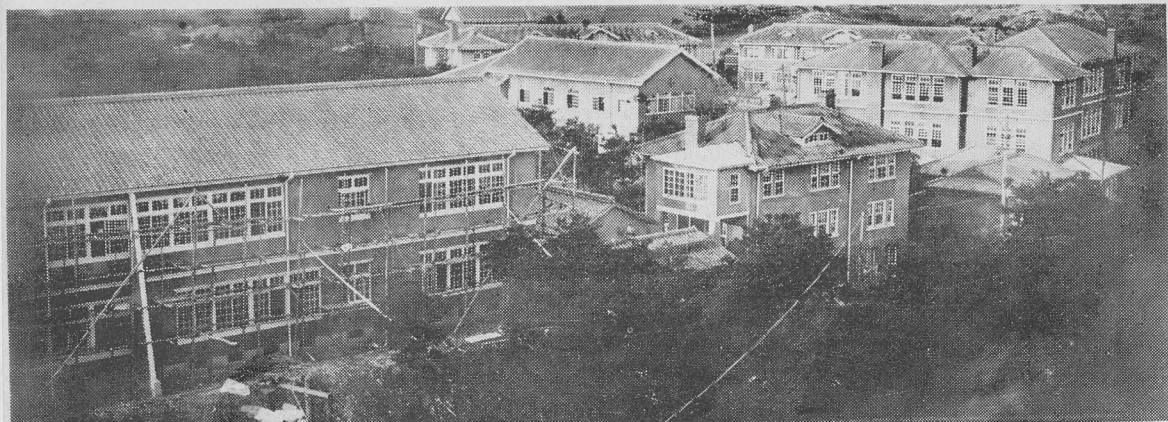
The third and last lesson that we can get from Mr. Rowe is that Mr. Rowe lived his faith. He put into practice what he believed. When a man hears God's command and he answers obediently " yes ", and he promptly goes out to put it into practice, he is living



Present Faculty and Student Body

his faith. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus says, "Not everyone that says to me 'Lord, Lord' . . . but he that doeth my will". Doing His will! Jesus taught this so clearly and Mr. Rowe lived it so beautifully! Shall we not search our hearts to see whether or not we are acting in accordance with Jesus' command? We are apt to think that we are children of God because we are receiving religious instruction as Seinan students. We do not become useful children of the kingdom by what we hear, but by obedience, by doing the will of God. We must take Mr. Rowe as our example and obey promptly, no matter how hard it may be. This is God's teaching, Christ's spirit and the core of the Japanese soul. Those who are not willing to do this should remember Jesus' words, "Depart from me. I never knew you".

Now this last thought and I am through. We teachers, graduates, and students of Seinan are honoring Mr. Rowe on this Memorial Day. We have listened to stories of his life, his deeds and his faith. But this is not enough. We must make his patriotism our patriotism, his deeds our deeds, and his faith our faith, and in so doing we may become good and loyal children of Japan and glorify God's name among our countrymen.



A Bird's Eye View from Top of Rowe Memorial Chapel

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