

The Presbyterian of the South



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SUMMER is a busy, fruitful season in his church, writes a pastor in a large Southern city. Why should it not be? The churches, in large number seem to think that work must be practically given up when the weather gets warm. Except schools, practically nothing but churches stop work in the summer. The explanation usually given is that so many people are away that the work cannot be carried on. We wonder how many times an effort has been made to find out what proportion of the members of a church is actually away from home at any one time. We believe that very few churches would ever find twenty-five per cent. of their members away from home at the same time. The question arises, whether the absence of twenty-five per cent. ought to deprive the seventy-five per cent. of their privileges and responsibilities. We recognize the fact that some summer Sundays are swelteringly hot in some places. But we have noticed also that some winter Sundays are cold and rainy and disagreeable. In either case, there is some discomfort in going to church. But men and women do not stay away from work or pleasure because of the weather, except in extreme cases. Places of amusements are well patronized all the summer. Crowds flock to the parks on hot days and evenings. So the trouble cannot be that it is too hot to leave home. The same means employed for going to places of amusements and to the parks can be employed for going to church. If the churches are not as comfortable for the people who attend as the theatres are, they ought to be made so. With proper ventilation and a wise use of electric fans, a church can be made as comfortable as any other place. If it is known that the church will be found comfortable and cool many will attend who will not otherwise. But ought God's people ever to stay away from God's house because of a little or even great discomfort? A business man or corporation would not long employ a man or woman who would say that the weather was too hot to go to work. Absence of some from the city may reduce the amount of work done by the church, but it need not stop it. It does not stop the devil's work.

STRIKES are serious things and often cause suffering and engender hard feelings. The great coal strike now in operation involves probably as many men and as many problems difficult to solve as any ever called in this country. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, in conjunction with the National Catholic Council and the Central Council of American Rabbis, has taken up the matter. They have presented to President Harding a petition, which is almost in the form of a demand, that the Government of the United States shall take the matter in hand and settle the strike. It presents plans by which it is claimed that this can be and should be done. Whether intentionally or not this paper really places the blame for the strike upon the operators. There are some things about this action of the Council that strike us as peculiar for an organization representing the Churches of Christ in America. Who gave the Council wisdom enough to say that the Government has the right or ought to settle strikes? How comes it that it knows just how the Government ought to handle the question, if it should undertake

to settle the question? The Council, in presenting its petition that much information must be acquired before responsibility for the strike can be definitely placed and an agreement be reached, and yet the petition has a decided leaning toward the miners as against the operators. This looks as though the Council had decided views on the subject, although the Government has not yet information enough to act upon. Whence did the Council get its greater information and its superior wisdom? We are decidedly anxious to see this strike settled. But there are many difficult questions involved and many different opinions are held by honest men. There is a great difference of opinion as to whether the Government ought to undertake to settle strikes, as there is difference of opinion as to whether the Government has the power to do so. Men in the Church differ on these subjects, as well as those outside. Some operators are in the Church and some are not, and the same is true of the miners. Neither the Church nor its representative has the right to pass judgment on any but moral and spiritual questions and then only after the fullest investigations and giving all parties concerned an opportunity to be heard. We believe that the Council in this matter has gone beyond any authority granted to it by the constituent churches.

ATTEendance upon all of the sessions of the General Assembly on the part of its members has often been seriously urged by that body. More than once has it urged Presbyteries not to appoint any as commissioners, who will not be able to be present at the opening session and stay through to the last. Twenty-four hours or more before the last Assembly adjourned numbers of the members began leaving. Two hours before the final adjournment a counted vote showed 50 present, though the enrollment had been 258. That some were providentially called away there is probably no doubt, but the Lord must have had a very poor opinion of the value of the more than 200 and a very high opinion of the value of 50, if He called so many away and left His work in the hands of a few. During that last twenty-four hours, indeed during the last two hours very important matters were acted upon. How many of the actions were adopted by a real majority of the Assembly it would be hard to tell. We have known of a Presbytery that paid the traveling expenses of those members who attended its meetings, but paid only those who remained to the close. We would hate to see such an action taken by the Assembly, but something ought to be done to insure a full attendance of those who are intrusted with the solution of the great questions connected with the work the Church is doing for God.

LAWS are made by the legislative departments of the national and state governments. Their enforcement is entrusted to officers elected by the people or appointed by the executive departments of the government. Each of these officers is sworn to enforce the laws as they stand upon the statute books. Generally this is faithfully done. But there is a growing tendency on the part of certain officials to say that certain laws are not to be enforced, or at least to fail to enforce those which they do not care to enforce, and these officers frequently require their subordinates to act

ing to their wishes, instead of carrying out the law. Recently a deputy game warden undertook to enforce the game law of the State which prohibits the sale of the plumage of any except game birds. He seized some of the prohibited plumage and reported his act to his superior. He was immediately discharged from the force by the game warden, who simply told him that he did not intend to have any of his deputies try to enforce that law. The matter was taken to the State's prosecuting attorney. Although the law seemed perfectly plain, and he had sworn to enforce it, he would do nothing, until, under heavy pressure from others who had become interested in the case, he agreed to refer the question to the Attorney-General of the State. This was done and that official said that the law was very plain and must be enforced. What will be the outcome yet remains to be seen. What we are especially interested in is the fact that this deputy who was trying to do his duty was dismissed without having the courts decide whether he was right, and without even being given a hearing by his superior. If law is to be enforced only according to the wish of some official, then the country has come to a bad state, and if a man is to be summarily dismissed from office for trying to do his sworn duty, what is the use of having laws? Faithful officials should have the support of good people.

HARD indeed is it for a great many people to learn some of the simple facts about the Presbyterian Church. In one of the cities of the South a reporter for a daily paper was recently writing up the leading Presbyterian church of his city. Referring to the bulletin published by the church he called attention with surprise to this statement which appeared in it: "It (the Presbyterian Church) recognizes the validity of the orders and sacraments of other Christian churches." He adds this comment: "The world moves." He seems to think that he had made a most remarkable discovery, that this church was taking an advanced position in liberality that puts its far ahead of any other Presbyterian church. The fact is, as every well informed Presbyterian knows, that the Presbyterian Church is as liberal in this respect as any other church and far more liberal than most churches. All that the Presbyterian Church requires for church membership is faith in the Lord Jesus as the Saviour. The consequence is that this Church receives members from any other evangelical church, merely upon evidence that they are members in good standing in some other church. For entrance into the ministry through ordinary channels of education and preparation a very high standard is maintained. But when a minister of another church wants to be received into one of our Presbyteries, and brings credentials to show that he has been ordained in accordance with the provisions of his church, the Presbytery does not examine him as to his qualifications, but receives him, though his preparation and education may fall far below the usual requirements of the Presbyterian Church. His ordination is accepted, just as though he had been ordained by another Presbytery. He is only examined to see if he accepts the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. This is necessary, because he is to teach these doctrines.

THE DIVINE COMFORT.

The initial note of the Gospel is sounded in Isaiah 40:1-2. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and say unto her, her iniquity is pardoned, her warfare is ceased, and she shall receive double at the Lord's hands for all her sins." These words are the beginning of the Gospel according to Isaiah. It peals with a note of joy as the heart of the prophet leaps out to meet God's salvation.

"Comfort" is one of the gracious words. It means, relief, cheer, nay, even joy in the face of adverse circumstances. It is needed. Trouble is no respecter of persons. Sin lies at the door of every heart, and sin always means, resulting misery. But it is the peculiar gift of the Christian.

Note how God gives a gracious reason for this changed point of view. We are brought into happy relationship with God. We are His people. He is our God. This change we call "the new birth." "The adoption into the family of God." We are no longer the children of the evil one. We are God's and have a right to all the blessings of our Father's house.

This alone ought to make us leap with joy in the presence of any evil that may come to us. But this is not all. We are assured that the period of our hard service in sin is over. We are no longer the driven slaves of Satan. No longer do our evil passions drive us with cruel bit. No longer are we in bondage through fear of death, the most terrible weapon of our arch enemy, the devil. "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry 'Aba, Father.'"

This is a public declaration, spoken to all men—so that no one can make us afraid. The fatal cause of hardship and misery and shame is removed. "Her iniquity is pardoned." Sin is the cause of all unhappiness. Only when the cause goes does the cure come.

God is delighted that He can forgive, that He can be just and yet the justifier of them that believe. It is a relief to Him to be able to receive us to Himself.

The word means "To accept with pleasure one, as an atonement for another." It beautifully describes the heart of God in viewing the work of the Mediator.

Then, too, the best is yet to come. "She shall receive double for all her sins." Looking back at the Cross it shows us the sufficiency of the atonement. "Double," means more than enough. Jesus, being Divine, is a sufficient atonement for all the sins of all the world. Looking forward it reveals the sufficiency of Jesus to satisfy our souls.

We speak of giving up pleasure and selfish pursuits for the gift of Christ. What folly. We get more than we give. We receive far more, and increasingly, throughout the ages.

These are the grounds of our comfort. It is ours to receive them, and to be happy in them.

The Christian should be the happiest of men. Are we sounding out the joy of God? Is there the shout of praise on our lips? There ought to be.

A. A. L.

Do the work that's nearest
Though it's dull at whiles,
Helping when you meet them,
Lame dogs over stiles.

—Kingsley.

Self-control in trifles trains to self-control in crises.

Contributed**ORTHODOXY IN CHINA.**

By Rev. S. H. Chester, D. D.

The writer of this article is very loth to appear in the Church papers in connection with the discussion of this topic. I deem it important, however, to make a brief statement with reference to an article on the subject by Rev. Hugh White, published in the Presbyterian of the South under date of June 7th. I am well assured that Mr. White would not make any statement that he did not believe to be absolutely true and accurate. It happens, however, that he was quite a long distance from the places where the things which he mentions are alleged to have occurred, and the report of what did happen, in traveling that distance, as is too often the case, came to vary essentially from the actual facts of the case.

Mr. White states first that the Annual Conference of Mission Boards in New York refused to "sanction" the Biblical Encyclopedia which was being prepared by Dr. Woods, in China. As a matter of fact, this conference did nothing of the kind. The question of financing the publication of Dr. Woods' Encyclopedia was brought before the Literature Committee of the New York Conference and that committee, mainly on the ground of the size and expensiveness of Dr. Woods' work, did not feel able to entertain the proposition of financing it. That is all that the New York Conference has had to do with the matter.

Mr. White also makes the following statement which could only refer to the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, "The Board of his own Church, while granting all other requests, would not grant this missionary's annual appropriations except on the condition that the money should not be used on Orr;" Orr's Encyclopedia being the basis of the work Dr. Woods is preparing.

I have searched the records of the Executive Committee for two years past in vain for any minute that would justify this statement of Mr. White. The natural effect of the statement, if believed to be correct, would be to discredit our Executive Committee as being unsympathetic with the effort being made to preserve sound teaching in our missionary institutions in China. The various actions of the Executive Committee taken in connection with this matter, would require too much space to be printed here, but they would show the very reverse of any lack of sympathy with those of our brethren in China who are most concerned about this matter.

The Executive Committee has addressed a letter to our China Missions conveying to them the action of the General Assembly taken on this subject, and instructing them to make the maintenance of essential orthodoxy in the teaching of our Union schools a condition of our continued co-operation in these schools. We deem it very desirable that this co-operation be maintained if it can be maintained consistently with our fidelity to the truth and without compromise of principle. Three members of our China Missions are members of the faculty of Nanking Theological Seminary, and we deem it a matter of very great importance that these representatives of our Church should not be deprived of the opportunity of influencing the rising generation of ministers in the Chinese Church by withdrawing from that seminary, unless it should become absolutely necessary for them to do so in order to preserve our testimony to the truth unim-

paired. We are confident that under the direction of men like Dr. Richardson, Dr. Price and Dr. Lancaster, our representatives on the faculty, and the other members of our China Missions who are represented on the Board of Control of the institution, anything that may have crept into the school that needs to be eliminated can and will be eliminated. If this proves impossible after judicious efforts on the part of our representatives to that end have failed, it will then be time for us to consider the matter of our withdrawal.

Meanwhile, let us not become panic-stricken and lose confidence in the ability of the men who compose our two China Missions to handle this matter in the way it ought to be handled; and let us not make it more difficult than it would otherwise be for them to handle it wisely and effectively by creating an impression in the Church at home that things are so much worse than they really are. So far as our own missionaries are concerned they are sound and loyal to the core, and the same is true of the vast majority of the entire missionary body in China. This being so we may be reasonably confident that an insignificant minority of radicals and free thinkers will not be able to destroy the foundations of the faith in the rising Church of China.

SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS.

By Rev. W. J. McMillan, D. D.

The ministers and pastors of churches in this and doubtless other cities have received ready-made announcements addressed to their congregations. In this city the announcement in part is as follows:

"To the Congregation: I hereby endorse William Jennings Bryan's Bible Talks, which are to be printed in the Sunday issue of the _____, and I take pleasure in recommending them to the members of this church.

"William Jennings Bryan, as you know, is a great church layman; in fact, he is conceded to be the leading lay preacher in America today. More than this he is one of the greatest authorities on the Bible and one of its most lucid interpreters. Out of the richness of his knowledge of the Scriptures he is writing these articles for the readers of the _____ one each Sunday.

"I commend these Weekly Bible Talks to you, because I know they will stimulate and renew your knowledge and understanding of the Bible."

There follows a place for the signature of the pastor and of the Sunday School superintendent, by the signing of which their endorsement of the above is secured.

To my mind this is an attempt of the publishers of newspapers to increase the sale of the Sunday edition, to do so under the guise of bringing forward "the leading lay preacher of America," to bring the principle of the Jesuit up to date. Just how many ministers and congregations will be led to lend their aid to the promotion of Sunday newspaper circulation I do not pretend to surmise. But it is to be hoped that ministers and churches will not lend themselves to the further promotion of the assumption that the end to be secured justified the means to be employed.

The publication of splendid articles in the edition can never justify the circulation of the Sunday newspaper. It is a pity that in the sale of these syndicated articles, for such I take them to be, Mr. Bryan did not expressly stipulate that they should be given to the people in some edition other than that issued on Sunday.

The Sunday edition of the newspaper is one