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### EDITORIAL NOTES.

A clear call comes to the people of the United States to pray with all earnestness and importunity at the present time that God will give victory to the right and will bring speedily upon the earth a righteous peace. As soon as word was received that the great battle now raging on the western front was on in France, a call of prayer was sounded in the town of Clayton, Alabama. Merchants, mechanics and professional men without exception agreed to close their places of business at six p. m., at which time the city bell is rung and the entire population gathers in the large assembly hall of the town for a special prayer meeting from 6:15 to 6:30 p. m. This kind of united prayer to God in all the cities, towns and communities of our country will undoubtedly be acceptable to God and will result in a great blessing to all our people.

Christian men and women to whom God has given an abundance of material wealth should not neglect to make provision in their wills for the work of the Kingdom of God. In these days of magnificent opportunities that are continually presented to the church of God, it is wise for God's people to make provision that some of their wealth may, after their departure from this world, continue to aid in the advancement of the Kingdom. If you have neglected to make some such provision in your will, why not add it now and have the comfortable assurance that, when you are called away, you will leave behind a substantial evidence of your interest in the progress of the Kingdom of God?

A generous bequest to the Southern Presbyterian Church is contained in the will of Mr. John C. Burroughs, formerly a member of the First Presbyterian church of Charlotte, North Carolina. By the terms of the will, probated recently, the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions will receive \$30,000; the trustees of the Home Mission Committee of the Synod of North Carolina, \$30,000; the Orphans' Home at Barium Springs, North Carolina, \$40,000 for an endowment fund; and the First Presbyterian church of Charlotte \$10,000 in addition to a former bequest of \$20,000 to be used in erecting a suitable Sunday school building upon the church lot. The will also contained an item devising \$3,000 to Rev. David H. Rolston, D. D., deceased, the friend and pastor of Mr. Burroughs.

The Independent Presbyterian church of Savannah, Georgia, founded in 1775, has always maintained the most intimate relationship with the Southern Presbyterian Church. While the church is independent in its organization, it was never schismatic, but always loyal to the historic faith. All gifts to benevolences from this splendid church go through the agencies of the Southern Presbyterian Church. The present pastor, Rev. Neal L. Anderson, D. D., is a member of Savannah Presbytery of our Church, as have been former pastors. A splendid view of both the exterior and interior of the beautiful building of this church, together with a sketch of its history, will be found on page 5 of this issue. The church is planning to celebrate in 1919 the centennial anniversary of the dedication of

the first building on the present lot, where stands today a replica of the original building which was destroyed by fire. The original building was dedicated May 9, 1819. James Monroe, President of the United States, and other national and state dignitaries attended the dedicatory services.

Cheering news comes from Rev. S. L. Morris, D. D., Executive Secretary of Home Missions of our Southern Presbyterian Church. Dr. Morris writes: "The past year breaks all records, showing an increase in contributions from every source—Churches, Sabbath schools, societies, individuals and legacies. The total amount received for the year was \$233,990.73, an advance of \$40,627.25 over last year. This is by far the largest increase we have ever had in any one year, being twenty-one per cent. It entirely wipes out the indebtedness incurred the first year of the European War. By close economy and scaling applications for aid, this debt has been gradually reduced each year; and the Committee now faces the new year without financial embarrassment, in the spirit of hopefulness, profoundly grateful for the cordial support and confidence of the Church."

Dr. Morris adds: "No less encouraging are the spiritual results attending the labors of our missionaries. We regret the failure to secure reports from all the fields, but those received show more than 5,300 additions on profession of faith, and 2,500 by letter. We earnestly invite the continued co-operation of pastors and sessions in the effort to evangelize and Christianize our nation. It can be accomplished only by the combined strength and unceasing activity of the whole Church in reliance upon the gracious favor of God."

The famous message of the German Kaiser to his troops to make themselves more terrible than the Huns has aroused the nations that love peace and righteousness to a determination to destroy forever the braggart boastfulness of a man who craves such power. In order to understand the Kaiser's purpose we must recall the story of the Huns. The question, "Who were the Huns?" is answered in a brief but illuminating sketch published on page 20 of this issue. Every American should read this story.

Rev. W. M. Morrison, D. D., one of our missionaries to Africa, died at Luebo, Congo Belge, Africa, on March 14. A cablegram containing the simple announcement of his death was received at the office of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, Nashville, Tennessee, on March 30. The message gave no particulars. Dr. Morrison was born near Lexington, Virginia, November 10, 1867, and was baptized in infancy as a member of the New Monmouth church. He was a graduate of Washington and Lee University and of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. After completing his course at the latter institution in 1895, he volunteered as a missionary to Africa. He was led to take this step in answer to the prayers, as he believed, of a Sunday school class of young girls, of which Miss Annie Wilson was teacher, in the Second Presbyterian church, Louisville, Kentucky. Only in later years did he learn of the prayers of this class in his behalf and of the special

Job's family and house and cattle were to be touched, but not his skin; then his skin, but not his life. All things we are called upon to suffer, and all the oppositions we meet with, are gauged and measured, and no reckoning is made for our unaided strength. Thus the arm of God encircles us.—Arnot.

bound together in the sufferings and victories of this great war.

#### Mother of Churches.

"It has been the mother of Presbyterian churches in this section of the South. Those who founded the First Presbyterian church, this city, went out from our congregation, while Hull Memorial is a daughter of the church, and the Anderson Street, Thirty-seventh Street, and Montgomery Chapels bear tribute to the quickening of interest in the extension of Presbyterianism in Savannah.

"This service extends across the seas, through mission work in Korea and China, and has long strengthened weak churches in the home land, particularly in the state of Georgia.

"God, who has done these great things for us in the times of old, is by these very things summoning us of this generation to the larger endeavors for His Kingdom.

"The men of the early history of this church were men of advanced ideas and a marvelous spirit of progress. Some of these men, during the building of the former church, daring all maritime traditions of the centuries, had staked their all on the fortunes of the steamship 'Savannah,' which during the very hours of the dedication of the church in 1819, was waiting at the dock to take the President of the United States on his first steamboat ride the following Wednesday, and then to steam out upon her epoch-making voyage across the Atlantic.

"Let one accuse Savannah of lacking in the spirit of progress in these early days. These were the men, with such vision of the future, who planned the massive building with its spacious seatings, and when the congregation rebuilt in 1889 along the same bold lines they issued a new challenge to the succeeding generations, to make good their faith in the future of the church. This task has fallen to our lot, and is as yet unfulfilled, a task that under the very circumstances calls on us to summon every resource of faith, sacrifice and service.

"We rejoice in the blessed fellowship of this church, and in the memories of the sainted dead, with whom we feel we can hold real fellowship at the mercy seat in this house of prayer. If, however, we are to realize the vision of those forward-looking men, whose heirs we are, there must be a daily increasing fellowship with that growing number of those who come to Savannah as strangers. It is perhaps difficult for those who have always made a city their home to know the heart-hunger of the stranger. Our very traditions, as the French say, 'noblesse oblige,' lay us under tribute to be loyal to the spirit of those who have gone before us. Jesus' favorite word was 'the Kingdom.' Only twice did He use the word Church. The mission of the Church, without which every beauty of architecture and every loyalty of doctrine are in vain, is to bring in this Kingdom of God among men—to 'sound aloud the call of God to human souls, until that great hour, when the last lonely soul shall see the unlifted Cross, and the whole round world be bound back by golden chains about the heart of God.'

"It is the 'Spirit and the Bride who say, Come'—an invitation implies a welcome, and for us in our day and generation there must be not only the invitation, but the loving, glad welcome to the house of God, and the hearts of the people of God. Such a welcome will find answer in the hearts of hundreds of men and women who will fill these pews in a spirit that seeks the blessing of the Saviour of Men—of that Saviour whose Shekinah glory abides upon the church that not only bows before His Cross, but in humble, tender, adoring love lifts that Cross before the poorest and humblest of God's children.

"By all the memories of the past, by the solemn covenant of the doctrines of grace, by the fellowship of all the years, by the service of those who have entered into rest, I summon you this day at the close of the old year to the life of the years to come—the life of humility, of faith, of fellowship and of self-sacrificing service in the name of Him, the great head of the Church, who loved us and gave Himself for us."

Savannah, Ga.

#### THE LAW OF PURE CONSCIENCE.

The law of a pure conscience is the law of God. Destroy God's law and man will have no more sense of duty, of right and wrong, than the brute. He will no longer be a subject of moral law, because there is no moral law to him in that case. The moral law may be written upon the heart of man or in the Book of God. No matter how it is made known, it is the supreme rule for conscience. The apostle teaches that the Gentiles have a natural law within them, but, since they have not hearkened to it, God gave them up to vile affections and all manner of abominations. Their consciences became so blunted that they ran headlong into all manner of excesses. The law of God needs to be known and ever kept before the mind, that conscience may be properly prepared for duty.—Christian Instructor.

From many quarters recently has come the suggestion that the meeting of the General Assembly of 1918 be omitted. The reasons given for this are strong and cogent:

The traveling expenses in going as far from the center of the Church as Durant will be heavy. The expense to the good people of Durant of entertaining the Assembly, at a time when the cost of living is very high, will be great. We have been asked by those in charge to avoid the use of the trains as much as possible. The train service is, of necessity, at this time bad, and apt to grow worse. The movement of any large body of men may, at any time, interfere with troop movements. These and other reasons have been advanced for omitting the meeting of the Assembly this year.

I am clearly of the opinion that our law forbids such omission. Paragraph 87 of the Book of Church Order reads: "The General Assembly shall meet at least annually." This seems clear, and to admit of no exceptions. It is true that the moderator of the Assembly of 1864, on adjournment, required "another General Assembly, chosen in the same manner, to meet at Macon, Ga., on the third Thursday in May, A. D., 1865." Because of the condition of the country at that date—the whole South being occupied by the armed forces of the North, the transportation system of the section having utterly broken down, and our ministers and many of our ruling elders being practically without money—this meeting was not held in May, 1865, nor could have been held. Later, in December of 1865, at the call of the moderator, the meeting of the Assembly that was to have been held in May, was held. In the above case it was absolutely impossible to comply with our law.

No such impossibility exists now. It is merely a question of expediency. And even in the case mentioned, the letter of the law was complied with, when, in December of the same year, the Assembly met.

The suggestion now is to omit the meeting of 1918 entirely. Our law requires an annual meeting. Nor does it seem to me possible for the Presbyteries to change this at their spring meetings. To change this law would require the procedure of Paragraph 142 of the Book of Church Order, and this is manifestly impossible in time to omit the meeting of 1918.

For the Presbyteries to refuse to elect commissioners, and thus let the meeting go by default seems neither right nor proper. It would cause the Presbyteries to break the laws of our Church as found in Paragraph 87, Book of Church Order. While Paragraphs 77 and 87, Book of Church Order seem to make it optional with the Presbytery as to sending commissioners, stating that "Presbytery has power to appoint commissioners to the General Assembly," and "Every Presbytery shall be entitled to send," etc.; such an interpretation is not borne out by other passages. The closing part of Paragraph 87 is mandatory. And such an interpretation would bring chaos into our whole system of appellate courts.

If it is optional with the Presbytery, as to appointing commissioners to the General Assembly; it is likewise optional with the session as to appointing commissioners to Presbytery; and our whole system breaks down.

But, while our laws forbids the omission of the meeting, if it be the desire of the Church to save the expense and avoid the inconveniences of a meeting at this time, the end sought for could be legally carried out in this way:

Let every Presbytery elect its commissioners regularly, at its spring meeting; at the same time let every Presbytery vote upon the question whether it desires a regular meeting of the Assembly in May, 1918. Let the result of this vote be at once forwarded to the stated clerk of the Assembly. If an overwhelming majority of the Presbyteries, say three-fourths, are in favor of postponing the meeting for a year; then let the moderator announce that such postponement will occur; only requesting certain commissioners from the adjacent Presbyteries, who can come at a minimum of expense and trouble, to meet at Durant at the time specified, for the purpose of immediately adjourning without the transaction of any business, to meet a year later.

Of course the whole matter here would hinge upon the question whether the General Assembly, under the constitution of our Church, has the lawful or rightful power to so adjourn. I do not find that this question has ever been raised in our Church. It is, however, a power that belongs to every deliberative body, unless specially prohibited by the constitution. I find no such prohibition in our constitution.

In 1847 the question of the constitutionality of adjournment from year to year was submitted to Chancellor James Kent, of New York, for his opinion. In sustaining the right of the Assembly to so adjourn, he said:

#### A Message From the Moderator.

"The adjournment preserves the identity of the Assembly. I have no doubt that upon a sound construction of the constitution the General Assembly has the same analogous power as all other political legislative bodies to which I have alluded. If any greater restriction had been intended, it would have been expressed. The language quoted implies as of course the power of adjournment. It is a wise and necessary power to guard against calamities, and over-ruling necessities, such as a desolating sickness, or conflagration, or insurrection, etc. It may be safely confided to such a representation, if anything may. Even in ordinary civil corporations, where powers are granted very guardedly and construed strictly, it is adjudged that a corporation may transact any business at an adjourned meeting which they might have transacted at an original meeting. (11 Vermont Reports 385). For these reasons briefly I conclude that the power of adjournment by the General Assembly . . . was constitutional."

Again, in 1869, both the Old School and New School Assemblies, meeting in New York in May, mutually agreed, and severally carried out the agreement, to adjourn to meet in Pittsburgh, Pa., on November 10, 1869.

Therefore, because of the inherent power belonging to our Assembly to so adjourn; because there is no constitutional provision forbidding such adjournment; and because in other Presbyterian bodies the right to adjourn from month to month and year to year has been exercised by the General Assembly; it is my opinion that our own Assembly would have such right.

In view of the seemingly widespread desire to avoid the expense of a meeting of our General Assembly, I would, as moderator, request that each Presbytery, after the election of its commissioners, vote on the question: "Shall there be a meeting of the General Assembly in May, 1918, for the transaction of business?"

And if three-fourths of the Presbyteries shall vote against the holding of such meeting, I shall request the commissioners from the adjacent Presbyteries to meet at the time and place fixed, in number sufficient to provide a quorum; and shall, at said meeting, entertain a motion to adjourn for a year.

If three-fourths of the Presbyteries do not vote against the holding of said usual meeting, then the meeting will be held as usual.

I would, however, with the call for such a vote, remind the Presbyteries that there are many and strong reasons for holding the Assembly as usual. Let us remember to keep first things first. Many important questions need to be solved. There is an economy that is sometimes false economy. Our great church causes need all the inspiration and help they can receive. And let us beware how we trifle with the machinery of our great Church.

Wilmington, N. C. John M. Wells, Moderator.

#### A LITTLE TALK WITH JESUS.

A little talk with Jesus, how it soothes the rugged road,

How it cheers and helps me onward, when I faint beneath my load;

When the heart is crushed with sorrow and my eyes with tears are dim,

I tell Him I am weary and fain would be with Him.

I tell Him I am weary and fain would be at rest, That I'm daily, hourly, longing for a home upon His breast;

And He answers me so sweetly, in tones of tenderest love,

I am coming soon to take you to My happy home above.

Ah! this is what I'm wanting, His lovely face to see, And I'm not afraid to say it, I know He's wanting me.

He gave His life a ransom, to make me all His own, And He can't forget His promise, to me, His purchased one.

I cannot live without Him, nor would I if I could; He is my daily portion, my medicine and my food. He's altogether lovely, none with Him can compare, The chief among ten thousand, the fairest of the fair.

I often feel impatient and mourn His long delay; I never can feel settled, while He remains away.

But we cannot long be parted, I know He'll quickly come,

And we shall dwell together in His all-blissful home.

So I'll wait a little longer, till His appointed time, And glory in the knowledge that such a home is mine.

There in our Father's dwelling, where many mansions be,

I'll sweetly talk with Jesus, and He will talk with me.

—Anon.