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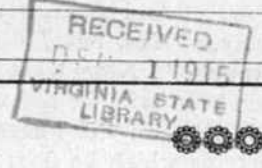
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Editorial Notes and Comment



CHRISTMAS will soon be here and the Sunday-schools are planning for the usual entertainments. For a long time the idea prevalent among Sunday-school people was that this was an occasion for giving candy and cakes to the children. A far better plan is now in use in many schools, and one which in a far better way, shows the true Christmas spirit, that of making others happy by giving. One of the best plans for such a service is that presented in "White Gifts for the King." In this well arranged program both young and old are shown how they can make their Christmas gifts to the King. They include first the giving of self, and service, and then of presents to be distributed among the less fortunate of the community. The program for this service may be secured from the Presbyterian Committee of Publication

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THE plea of many Romanists against the prohibition of the liquor traffic on the ground that such prohibition "interferes with the personal liberty of the individual" hardly comes with good grace or force from such a source. From those who teach and enjoin that men must not even think for themselves on the most vital themes, or feed their minds and souls out of the Holy Bible, or out of any literature except such as that Church permits, who denounce all who will not accept their faith and the rule of their Church as anarchistic and infidel, who have formally adopted a scheme for insulting every upright man and pure woman, and their children, who have not been married by a priest, who approve divorces where the parties will only consent to repudiate former marriages because not performed by priests, who teach men to look with contempt upon the law of the land, such a plea has precious little force. And so far as the liquor traffic is concerned, the trouble is that about nine-tenths of the saloonists are Romanists, and their trade must not be interfered with.

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THE Catholic papers and organizations, with very few exceptions, are crying out against President Wilson's recognition of Carranza as the ruler of Mexico. Their opposition is based upon the fact that Carranza is anti-clerical in his politics. As there is a Catholic party in Mexico, regularly organized, and as actively engaged in the game of politics as any party there, it is not to be wondered that Carranza, representing another party, is very obnoxious to the clerical party. It seems to be forgotten, by these sharp critics of our wise President, that it is not the latter alone who is supporting the First Chief of Mexico, but that he is receiving recognition on the unanimous wish of the representatives of Central America and South American republics which are, if anything, even more Roman Catholic than Mexico.

E VANGELISM is occupying the thought of the Church to-day, as it never did in the past. The deep interest shown in the subject is evidence of the felt need for the results that are expected from the efforts of those who are known as evangelists. But are evangelists necessary to evangelism? Some of the most remarkable revivals of religion that have been known in this country were those in former days which sprang up and swept over large sections, with no human leader. We would only commend the evangelist for his good work. But is not the Church depending too much upon him, instead of upon God's Spirit and personal prayer and work?

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I NFALLIBILITY of the Pope is a doctrine hard for Protestants to understand. According to our understanding of it the Pope is always right and never makes any mistakes in what he says or does. We believe that some Catholics hold that this applies only to his official acts or utterances. Even under this limitation it is hard to understand how the present Pope would explain a recent act of his. Ever since the Popes lost their temporal power, they have maintained that they must remain as prisoners in the Vatican; that it would not be right for them to come outside. Recently the Pope left the sacred precincts of the Vatican and in his official capacity attended a church outside of its walls. Now either the former Popes were wrong in saying that a Pope could not rightfully come outside the walls of the Vatican, or else the present Pope was wrong in doing so. Which is right and which is wrong? We refer the question to the Sacred College for solution.

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I F any enterprise is undertaken or any work wrought in "the name that is above every name," there need be no fear of its failure. The believer or the Church that magnifies Christ will always be on sure ground, hearty, vigorous, united, strong and fruitful. Wherefore, my brethren, be ye steadfast unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

* * *

WE note long pastorates and sing the praises of men who stand by one charge, as minister, for many years. Shall not kind things be said of men in humbler place? This month there died in New York a man who had served a church for sixty-three years as sexton. William Cuyler was his name, and he died at the age of eighty-three. He was the sexton of the Fifth Avenue church, New York. In good old Scotch fashion he always went just in front of the pastor and reverently carried the Bible and laid it on the pulpit desk.

MORMONISM is one of the real curses of this land. It is a black blotch upon our fair escutcheon, which should be wiped out. It is gratifying to find that there are signs among them that some of them are waking up to the truth. A Presbyterian missionary is publishing a paper at Brigham City, Utah, which is finding subscribers among the Mormons. A college student at commencement had the courage to speak his mind and call for reforms. The prohibition element is growing strong and active, notwithstanding that it is opposed by the Church. May the good work go on.

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WHEN they wish to make use of it for their own ends, men who persistently denounce the Church are ready enough to call upon it. It is sought for relief, for publicity, for the undertaking of charitable enterprises. If it does not at once lend itself to their schemes and plans, they at once denounce it more bitterly than ever. They never seem to think that they have first sought to belittle it and drag it down and pour contempt upon it before they called on it to further their ends and that for that reason it should not be expected to be ready to rush very sympathetically to their help, nor to rush to the assistance of those whom it knows to be seeking to use it simply for their own convenience.

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I T has been a long time since any one has written about the Synod's being a "fifth wheel" to the Church. Perhaps the meetings of these courts have suggested it again to some minds. Much depends upon the Synods themselves as to this matter. If a Synod makes its meeting purely perfunctory, it is apt to convince many that it is an almost useless appendage of our series of Church courts. There is before each Synod a strong temptation to make it so, from its very nature.

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I T is a question with many whether the numerous appeals, suggestions, advice, plans and the like sent to the pastors accomplish much good. The active pastor is already doing his duty fully and in a manner adapted to the conditions. He knows his church thoroughly, he understands its needs and capacity, he can handle it more wisely than anybody else. The inactive pastor will not be any less inactive under the spur of outside advisers. He will indeed often resent counsel thrust upon him unasked. Some inquiry indicates that the majority of the letters and circulars go direct to the pastoral waste basket. If these letters and circulars could go to the masses of the people in the churches rather than to the pastors they would probably be more effective. The best way to accomplish this would be through the medium of the religious newspapers.

for the same word is used in the original to describe eternal duration. If hell can come to an end, so can heaven, for the same word describes the perpetuity of each place.

Both human reason and experience teach that sin produces suffering, unless we turn fool, and deny both sin and pain; but even that does not alter the case, for the fact remains. If sin produces suffering here it will produce it hereafter, for there is nothing in death to change the character. Reason agrees with sacred writ that he who is filthy at death remains filthy. Many who die are unconscious at the time or in a semi-unconscious state—wrung with pain or drugged with opiates—teaching that the death-bed is no place of repentance. Carrying the same sinful state into eternity that we have here, we will suffer there.

Suffering, in eternity, will no more produce a goodly life than it does here. When was there a time when there was more suffering than now? But men seem to be more set upon destruction than ever. And there was never a time when there was more wholesale murder and crime.

The Unitarian takes refuge in the denial of future punishment to justify the ways of God to man, and remove a stain and blot which, they say, would otherwise rest upon the Churches of God. But their objections to our interpretation of Revelation lie also against their reasoning. If future punishment does not accord with our idea of the goodness and justice of God, how about past punishment for sin and the sinner. Why should evil be originated in this world, if God is all-wise, all-loving and all-powerful? Why should millions live only to imbrute themselves, harden others, and bring multitudes into the world to sin worse than themselves? Why should God continue in being from a dateless past a multitude of evil spirits, whose supreme desire is to plot against and ruin man. Is the past according to your ideas of goodness and right?

Will the future be as you think? Puny mortal, you can't dictate to God or explain His dealings. His ways are past our comprehension. Read the crimes of the day, see the things which are a stench in the nostrils of God; behold the frightful suffering and widespread sorrow of the human family; see the very orgies of the damned enacted in some places. Put together all the suffering, sin, tears, disgrace, degradation and anguish of this world. Can hell itself be more terrible? Is it our ideal of divine government? Yet God permits this world to exist with all of its sorrows. The Unitarian sometimes pictures the Christian world as believing in a hell of literal fire. This is a mistake. Fire and outer darkness and other figures are used to represent the sufferings of the lost. We do not know just what hell is, but it is bad enough. Mental sufferings are often worse than physical sufferings.

If the desire of the Unitarian world prevailed and the doctrine of future punishment was blotted from the minds of men, it would not produce a millenium. Look at the French Revolution—"the bloodiest picture in the book of time." Future punishment was denied and ridiculed. Death was declared to be an everlasting sleep and was so written upon the gates of the cemeteries. What was the result? That which seized angels with horror and struck the world with amazement, a perfect carnival of crime. The streets of the most splendid cities in France ran red with blood, virtue was outraged and the floodgates of iniquity were opened. For the safety of society in the republic, the doctrine of future rewards and punishments had to be re-established.

Old-time religion was good enough for our fathers and it is good enough for us. The only hope of our poor, wayward race is in the grace of God and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gloucester, Va.

THE HOMING PIGEON.

By Dr. L. P. Bowen.

His northern friends were stanch and true,
Their creed congenial as their features;
New Castle's Presbyterial roll

Well-stocked with sturdy, wholesome preachers;
Among them from Makemie down,
Not one black sheep or pulpit clown.

And him they treated like a king,
Born and to die within their bounds—
The bonny land of evergreens,
Old Eastern Shore's own classic grounds;
And yet again—and yet again—
His heart veered back to Southern men.

With them he'd stood in strenuous times,
With them spent all his rugged years,
With them grown old and bent and gray
Amid their labors and their prayers—
The Southern fold, bride of the Lamb,
Like Elim's wells and Elim's palm.

The plea of old Rehoboth church,
The mother church of North and South,
Had wooed him to their heart and help
To reinvok her faded youth;
His mission done—and then, and then,
His soul went back to Southern men.

Of no account to South or North,
That dire "dead-line" athwart his nose,
His life a relic of the past,
His brow a bank of winter's snows—
At eighty-two his joy and prize
To coast the marge of Paradise.

He's near enough the Borderland
To get a glimpse beyond the blue
Of Thornwells, Palmers, Dabneys, Hoges,
And many a hero known to you—
The preacher and the citizen,
Celestial throng of Southern men.

With something of prophetic ken
He sees your Zion vigilant
To hold aloof from Caesar's thrall,
For Christ's own crown and covenant—
Her protests never to abate
Against a mongrel Church and State.

A Christ divine, atoning blood,
Predestined cure for earthly ills;
Abjuring nostrums of the quack
And crude humanitarian pills;
To guard the landmarks—ford and fen—
And knit the ranks of Southern men.

The sacred heights of womanhood,
The Dixie type, refined and pure,
Retiring, brave, and well prepared
Defeat or triumph to endure;
The modest violet—blush and tear—
A revered queen within her sphere.

Our Northern Church does noble work—
God bless her mission wide and grand;
But there are fortresses to man
By our own Southern motherland;
A duty stern that yet abides
To stem the world's incoming tides.

Presbytery of Norfolk, where of old
Josias Mackie preached and prayed,
Where our Makemie spoke for God,
In gospel aureoles arrayed,
The exile reaches home again,
Life linked henceforth with Southern men.

(Dr. Bowen had been for several years in the Northern Church, but recently joined Norfolk Presbytery.—Editors.)

Above the entrance of a hospital in London is a significant symbol. An angel before an ash heap blowing into the embers. Below, the words: "Fositan seinti lul alatet:" "There may still be a spark therein." That is why we should work without ceasing and not despair of the salvation of the deeply fallen.

HOPE!

By Rev. M. B. Lambdin.

Hope paints the rainbow. Hope hangs the morning star in the darkened sky as the sentinel of the night, and the harbinger of dawn. Hope faces the sunrise and welcomes the radiant light of a new-born day flushed with the promise of coming joys. Hope lights the fires of heroic resolve in the heart, and keeps it alive with her breath.

Hope says to the man that has gone down in the stress and strain of life's conflicts: "Up! and try it over again! One battle has been lost. The next may be won." Hope lives next door to the "Next."

The stars in their courses fight on the side of hope. The sun stands still upon the Gibeons of hope's valiant efforts. The moon radiates its light over the Aijalons of hope's supreme endeavor.

The man of hope is the man of destiny. While hope lives, the man lives. When hope dies, the man dies.

"We are saved by hope."

Montgomery, W. Va.

CHRIST'S CONFIDENCE.

A very marked feature of Christ's entire earthly ministry was the supreme confidence which he manifested in respect to all of the great verities of heaven and earth. Not a tinge of doubt had a place in his mind. He never spoke of his mission on earth as though it were an experiment. He constantly asserted that he came down from heaven. He repeatedly spoke of his having always lived with the Father. He talked of past history as one who knew the divine purposes which underlay the whole series of things. He referred to the prophecies without a note of questioning. In all of his allusions to the true prophets, he never intimated that they were undeserving of the fullest confidence and acceptance. It is plainly apparent that his own confidence in all of the Old Testament was very strong and complete. No one could have been in Christ's company for a considerable length of time without observing his perfect reliance upon the existing Scriptures as the very word of God. At one time he said to the Jews: "The Scripture cannot be broken." There is great significance in those few words. Not only is it true that the Scripture cannot be broken, but it is also true that Christ's confidence in the authority and integrity of the Scripture could not be broken. Then note Christ's unbroken and sublime confidence in his Father. He said that he knew that the Father always heard him when he spoke to Him. There was not the slightest peradventure about it. He always knew that whatever the Father told him to do was the best thing to do. Furthermore, Christ was serenely confident as to the progress of his kingdom. He had no hesitancy in saying that it would mightily increase, and finally overcome all other kingdoms. He never suggested that possibly the powers of darkness would so far get the advantage of his kingdom as to hinder it from a glorious triumph; no, nothing of the kind. It was because Christ's confidence in the progress and triumph of his cause was so great, that he never had any fears concerning anything. Nothing gave him alarm. His supreme and unshaken confidence ought to be daily inspiration to us. It is our privilege to be as confident concerning divine things as our great Lord and Master was.

C. H. Wetherbe.

"Do not look at God through your difficulties, but look at your difficulties through God."