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EDITORIAL NOTES.

The consciousness that Jesus is standing at our side, that He is our ever present Companion, will cause us to lose all relish for the unholy or unclean thought, word or deed. The perpetual presence of the Christ is the most powerful preventive of evil in our lives.

A careful study of the teachings of Jesus as He journeyed through Judea and adjoining countries with His disciples will reveal the fact that He was laying the foundation for the future development of His disciples in knowledge and power. Several times we read that the faith of His disciples was strengthened after His death when they remembered certain things that He had said to them while He was with them. A similar task confronts Christian people today in dealing with young people. Parents, Sunday school teachers, friends—all should seek to anticipate the temptations and dangers to which children will be exposed and to prepare them for such experiences. It is for this reason that Christian parents and faithful friends endeavor to ground the young people in the faith, that they may be prepared for the days of doubt that are sure to come.

What effect does our conduct have as we thus seek to lay in the hearts of young people the foundations for future development in faith and grace? We teach them what to believe and what to do. As they shall look back over our lives will they see in our conduct confirmation for their faith? Does our conduct conform to our teaching? Can it be said of us that we have taught one thing and practiced another? It is eminently true, as one has said, that we are laying the foundation for the faith or the doubt of the next generation.

Men often cry out for a sign or some unusual thing to confirm their faith. They forget that the revelation of God's glory and truthfulness and power are about us everywhere. It is related of Martin Luther that he one day declared, "I saw not long since a sign in the Heavens." What was this sign that Luther saw?—some startling natural phenomena? No. This is the way in which he described it: "I was looking out of my window at night and beheld the stars and the whole majestic vault of God held up without my being able to see the pillars on which the Master has caused it to rest." With a joyful appreciation of God's almighty power and grace, he cried out: "I will trust Him even when I cannot trace Him."

Stories of the joy with which soldiers on the front in Europe receive and read the Word of God are frequent and inspiring. An Austrian officer, who in civil life is a lawyer, has written that the letter-carrier recently handed him a package, which he received with disappointment, because he had hoped for letters from his home. He says that his joy was very great, however, when he opened the package and found that it was a copy of the Word of God. He began to read it at once in the glare of the flashing cannon. Another officer writes: "I send you my deepest gratitude for the Book which shall be my preferred companion, a comfort in trouble and an inspiration to faith." Altogether about 800,000 of

the "Million Testaments" which has been the goal of the World's Sunday School Association, have reached the soldiers of Europe. There is still, however, great need. Among the Italian soldiers alone between three and four million men, representing every class in Italian society, are eager to read the life-giving Word of God.

The special season for prayer, self-denial and free will offerings for Foreign Missions in all the churches of our General Assembly (February 1-21) is bringing to the members of the Southern Presbyterian Church an unusual opportunity to render a timely service to the great cause of Foreign Missions. "A Noon Hour Prayer League" has been organized by the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, and every member of our Church is requested to devote a short time to prayer each day at noon during the three weeks of this special season. A great volume of united prayer should go up to God each day in earnest supplication that He will open the way for overtaking the needs of the heathen nations and the unparalleled opportunities that are now presented to our Church. On page 24 of this issue the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions presents another vigorous message concerning this vitally important work, voicing a call to sacrificial living.

In studying the mission work in China during the months of January and February the missionary societies of our Church are informing themselves concerning the world's most needy mission field. Special efforts are being made to reach the children of China. In Sunday school work a unique feature introduced by many of the missionaries, is that the children are first taught to read in connection with their Sunday school lesson. A "Lesson Primer" is issued by the China Sunday School Union, which has upon it "Life Problem Pictures" from Chinese life. The lesson is begun by a discussion of some point of conduct suggested by the picture; class discussion follows, and the whole class session brings itself to a decision regarding some "specific act" which they are urged to "will to do" during the week following. One of the simplest things a member of the class may do is to take this little "Lesson Primer" and teach the big characters inside to some one in his own home or elsewhere. In the lessons for a year or two, some six hundred characters are taught.

Remarkable progress is being made in Sunday school work in South America. A two-months' visitation of the West Coast has just been made by Rev. George P. Howard, Sunday school secretary for that continent, under the World's Sunday School Association. On this trip, Mr. Howard has covered the coast from Concepcion and Temuco in the south to Lima and Callao in the north, and has spent several days in each city visited, so that he has had an opportunity to learn the problems in each school and time enough to go over their solution with teachers and superintendents. Mr. Howard has been organizing the "Cradle Roll" and "Beginners Departments" in many places. Six months ago there was not a single "Kindergarten Department" in any of the fifty Sunday schools in Buenos Aires, with its

How many prodigals are kept out of the Kingdom of God by the unlovely characters of those who profess to be inside!—Henry Drummond.

Contributed

For the Christian Observer.

PROTEST AGAINST WORLDLINESS.

The session of the Bream Memorial Presbyterian church, of Charleston, West Virginia, recently adopted the following resolution concerning worldliness:

"The session of this church feeling that worldliness is vitally opposed to godliness, and feeling that the spiritual interest of every member of the church is especially committed to its charge, and hearing with pain that there is a growing practice among the membership of this church of indulging in dancing, a form of worldliness considered most dangerous to both the moral and spiritual welfare of those engaging therein; does hereby take the following official action: We, the session, of this church, disapprove, both by practice and belief that form of worldliness commonly known as dancing, and we hereby earnestly request the serious thought of every member of this church on this subject; and as the spiritual leaders of this church, we do beseech every member of this church now engaging in this practice to cease to do so as we are firmly persuaded that it is incompatible with your spiritual growth and Christian influence; and we hereby lay this request upon your conscience, before your God and ours, to whom we must all give account for the deeds done in the body."

This action was published in a recent bulletin of the church. It was signed by the individual members of the session, and Rev. Samuel Glasgow, pastor.

Charleston, W. Va.

For the Christian Observer.

THE NATIONAL LEPROSARIUM.

By W. M. Danner.

At last the care and treatment of persons afflicted with leprosy in the United States seems to have reached a stage of assured success: The bill to provide a great "National Leprosarium" for lepers in the United States, and to prevent the further spread of the disease, as passed by the House of Representatives some weeks ago, was unanimously passed by the United States Senate January 25, 1917.

The Senate Committee on Public Health and National Quarantine, of which Mr. Ransdell, of Louisiana, is the efficient chairman, made a special investigation and held a hearing last March. Experts were brought to Washington and their testimony on the care of leprosy has been published in a volume of two hundred pages giving not only latest definite information concerning conditions in America, but a well stated case of the lepers' needs in our country.

Various hindrances have been met by the Committee on Public Health in the efforts made to secure the passage of this bill. Unexpected opposition from many sources has been overcome until at last the bill has been passed. The United States Public Health Service is thus fully authorized to proceed with the selection of a site and the erection of buildings. This will bring rejoicing to thousands of people who have been looking forward anxiously to the passage of this law which will not alone provide for the care of lepers but will in a few years rid the nation of this dreadful malady.

Senator Ransdell, to whom greatest credit is due, did not proceed without fortifying his committee with actual knowledge at first hand of conditions in America. Dr. Isadore Dyer, of Louisiana, Dr. Geo. W. McCoy, formerly of Honolulu, now of Washington, Dr. Howard Fox, of New York, Dr. J. W. McKean, of Siam, Dr. Frederick S. Hoffman, of Newark, N. J., Dr. M. F. Engman, of St. Louis, Dr. W. C. Rucker, of Washington, Dr. H. M. Bracken, of St. Paul, Dr. Frank H. Parker, of Massachusetts, and others equally interested, gave united expressions of interest in support of the measure.

One of the most thrilling statements at the Senate Health Committee hearing in March was a letter from John Early, the Washington leper, who appealed to Senator Ransdell to "remember we are outcasts of society but we still have human tastes and feelings."

Senator Ransdell in his preliminary statement at the Senate Health Committee hearing generously gave credit to "The Mission to Lepers" for bringing to his notice the actual conditions existing among the lepers of the United States.

Now that the bill has been passed, everything will be left in the hands of the United States Public Health Service of which Dr. Rupert Blue is the efficient Surgeon-General. The various representatives of "The Mission to Lepers" throughout the American Churches will rejoice in the victory for this humanitarian measure. Many of the residents of the Massachusetts and the Louisiana leper colonies have already indicated their delight in that federal provision is to be made for all the North American lepers. The individual lepers now found in seventeen other states will likewise share in the benefits of this long-needed legislation.

Ultimately, through the steps now taken, leprosy will be entirely eliminated from the United States. There is real cause for congratulations that the

matter is now actually taking tangible shape.

Cambridge, Mass.

For the Christian Observer.

**A "MISSOURI" CONFERENCE
On Home Missions in Kentucky.**

By Rev. C. Groshon Gunn.

There is an expression which is familiar to all, "I am from Missouri, you have to show me." Several weeks ago there was held in the city of Lexington, Ky., a conference on home mission work to show by a true "Missouri" method what opportunities were in the home mission field in the West Lexington Presbytery of Kentucky.

This one-day conference was held in the First Presbyterian church under the direction of Thomas B. Talbot, home mission superintendent of the Presbytery. Representatives of the various missionary institutions of the Presbytery were present. Miss Eliza Richards, of Canyon Falls Academy and Rev. C. Groshon Gunn, pastor of the Guerrant Memorial church in Jackson, represented the mountain work. Rev. G. L. Telford, pastor of one of the oldest country churches in America, located at Pisgah, near Lexington, represented the country work. Mrs. F. S. Allen, of Sharpsburg, made an appeal for home missions. Rev. W. A. Hopkins, assistant pastor of the First Presbyterian church, Lexington, gave a spirited talk on evangelism in the mountains. Mrs. J. M. Spencer conducted a round table on home mission work as a part of the week of prayer exercises being held every afternoon that week.

The purpose of the conference was to show the needs by having workers direct from various fields. Those who gathered there found that "seeing is believing." None could listen to the personal experiences of those engaged in this work without having new inspirations and new vision of the opportunity at their very doors.

As a direct result of this conference a party spent Thanksgiving in the mountains seeing, for the first time, what a remarkable opportunity has been at the very doors of the "Blue Grass" without the full realization of those in the churches more favorably situated.

Certainly the "Missouri" method of showing folks our home mission opportunities might be emulated by other Presbyteries; and the information gained will put new life in the organizations, that are failing in so many instances to have a vision, without which "the people perish."

Jackson, Ky.

For the Christian Observer.

HEATHENISM AT CLOSE RANGE.

By Rev. L. T. Newland.

There are those who say that the heathen's religion suits him just as well as the Christian's faith suits him, and so it is folly to try to force the heathen to adopt a religion that is foreign to his mental constitution. This criticism of the work of the missionary does not come only from worldlings but there are many professing Christians that bolster up their opposition to the missionary propaganda by this form of specious reasoning. Of course all honest and intelligent Christians know that no heathen faith, no matter how picturesque it may be on the outside, can have other than a ruinous effect on the people that follow it. And as for that other class of globe-trotters, tourists and all such who go into ecstasies over the beauty of Bahaism, the philosophy of Buddhism and the stern faith of the Mohammed and are loud in their condemnation of the officious missionary, it is very probable that almost any sort of a heathen religion would be better than the weak and emasculated Christianity they profess.

After all you can only judge any religion by its effect upon the lives of the people who profess it and this effect can only be judged by those who have lived among the professors and have heard the tears as well as the laughter, who have seen the secret fruits of this tree of the devil's own planting in the lives dedicated to his service. The following are just a few instances that explode the theory of the innate good of heathendom far better than pages of arguments.

The Unfaithful Wife.

A few days ago I heard a great wailing mixed with angry shouts and the sickening smack of a club on a bare back. Looking up the road, I saw a great crowd gathered around a wine shop from whose door issued the sounds. They were pushing and crowding each other as though they were being treated to a most fascinating circus. Loud over their remarks came the moaning chant of a woman as she cried out against the inhuman beating she was getting, while hoarse and passion-choked, rose the voice of her husband as he cursed her as only a heathen can curse. Did any one protest against it? Could the woman hide her humiliation? Not at all. A great crowd of staring scandal mongers, pressed close around not to lose a second of the excitement. The police passed by and after a cursory glance went on laughing and joking over the spectacle. Little children crept through the knees of their elders and then mocked and mimicked the tragedy.

For almost a day this wailing, beating and cursing polluted the air until both parties stopped from exhaustion. The husband, or rather master, for she was not his real wife, had heard a rumor of adultery on the part of the woman and though he was steeped in immorality, according to good heathen custom, he set about proving his own chastity and just indignation by making the punishment of his erring wife as public as possible. There was no eye to pity and no hand to save for she was only a woman and in heathen lands a woman is not as valuable as a good work ox.

The Wife Who Was Discouraged.

There has been a hurry call at the hospital and everybody is flying around getting restoratives ready and arraying the forces in the old, old fight against death. Soon a young woman is rushed in on a chair carried by two strong men. An old woman trots along by her side but otherwise she is all alone. And the stage is set for another heathen tragedy. The woman is not pretty but there is a hunger and despair in her eyes that only long ages of neglect and suffering could produce. Her lips are burnt and withered, she breathes in gasps while her face is pinched and colorless and already the pallor of death is settling upon her. As soon as the doctor sees her he knows the case is hopeless for she is one of the many lye eaters, an attempted suicide.

For months she has had to stand the abuse of her husband and the constant contempt and nagging of her mother-in-law because she has not presented her lord and master with a son and even her own mother upbraided her for being so derelict to her duty. They all made life so unendurable for her that at last she seeks to escape by the one way she knows—home-made lye. Then with her throat contracted and with a torturing thirst she has had to live for days and hear fresh abuse from her now thoroughly enraged husband. At last when her case is hopeless and, finding that he stands to lose a good worker, as a last chance he sends her to the hospital but does not deign to come with her. A few days she lingers, deserted and alone, without the power to speak but showing in her expression her terrible suffering and then passes on to join that great number of outraged and abused women whose suffering mutely cries out against the blighting curse of heathendom.

An Unmarried Girl's Grave.

I am glad to say the Japanese law is making the following incident less and less frequent. In one of our mission stations under the shadow of the church there lives a rich man who is an ardent opposer of Christianity, and to show his opposition he is very punctual in his observance of all the old heathen customs. One day his granddaughter, a girl about 16 sickened and in just a few days was dead. Great was the consternation that event brought to the household for nothing is so ignominious as for a girl of marriageable age to die unmarried. How was the family to escape the disgrace?

The sorceresses were called in and first they drove all the evil spirits out of the house. Then one old hag took a needle and thread and sewed up the lips of the girl to keep the malignant and stubborn spirit that had kept her from getting married from escaping. Then the body was tightly wrapped in old cloths tied up in an old mat and loaded on to the shoulders of a coolie, who in the dead of night made a shallow grave in the middle of the public road and buried her face upwards, so that every passer by would tread on her face and thus proclaim to the world the unspeakable disgrace of a girl dying unmarried.

I have counted as many as a dozen of these graves in less than ten miles of road and they all tell the same story that woman has no standing in a heathen country.

A Widow's Lot in Korea.

This young widow is now a cook in a missionary's home and is as quiet and lady-like as any young woman of any country. A few years ago she became a widow and immediately her troubles

began. She was insulted whenever she went outside her lot. Men came boldly to her house at night and demanded admittance. She was harried and harassed until her life became almost unbearable. She was a Christian and was determined to keep herself inviolate, but even after her brave stand against disgrace had won her immunity from attack, she was still the object of malicious and mean gossip. Why didn't she appeal for protection? you ask. A widow has no protection in heathen Korea. She has absolutely no standing. Any man has as much right to go to her home and carry her off as he has to pick up a stray dog along the road. She is the legitimate spoil of anyone who wants a servant, a drudge or another concubine. She has no voice at law, no rights whatsoever. What little right she had resided in her husband and was lost at his death; when he dies she is at the mercy of a licentious, impure, hard-hearted heathen world. Her husband's family throw her out, her own family refuse her a home, so she has to become the slave of some other man to live. Only those with children large enough to be a protection, or the Christians, are able to protect themselves against this custom.

A Heathen Funeral.

Just one more heathen custom. I saw this just the other day. First I heard a Korean band beating a jig tune and then I saw what so much hilarity was about. It was a Korean funeral. Ahead walked the band playing furiously, then came several half-drunk men, dancing and scraping in their best style. After them came the bier decorated like a float advertising a popular brand of medicine. This was borne on the shoulders of about twenty men who swayed from side to side, advanced or retreated in time to the music. All were more or less drunk and all expected to get drunk. Following came the rope girt mourners, two only, whose grief was the only real emotion displayed by the whole crowd. After a while it passed out of sight, noisy, boisterous and disreputable. After the funeral there was a great feast and everybody got drunk. The old mother went to her last resting place accompanied by the drunken cries and foolish antics of a crowd of hired mourners, yet some dare say Christianity has nothing to offer the heathen.

Mokpo, Korea.

**EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS FROM
SUBSCRIBERS.**

"The 'Christian Observer' is one of the greatest blessings that comes into my life. It keeps me informed and it keeps me close to my Lord."

"Though not a Presbyterian I have thought your paper one of the best, if not the very best, I have known. It appears to stay closer to spiritual lines than other papers I have known."

"I call your paper my 'message' paper, for it always seems to hold a special message for me. We have taken your dear paper for many, many years, and often in times of deep sorrow and great trial I have found sweet comfort and help in its loved pages."

"My brother takes your valued paper and I am a constant 'CHUM' and daily companion of this best of all papers, the 'Observer,' and would cut my meals short before I would do without it."

"We love the 'Observer.' It is an old friend that grows dearer as the years go by—a friend tried and true."

One of the ministers of our Church recently wrote: "Its clear type; its high class paper; its 'on time' week by week; its pure theology; its clear-cut departments (the children run to meet the letter carrier); the weary pastor is heartened again—for still another 'his best' effort in the pulpit; the bedimmed of eye-sight put on their 'specs' to see 'who has crossed the river—faithful unto death;' they, young and all—who has been married last? Its loyalty to every enterprise of the Church; its faithful warnings."

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