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EDITORIAL.

THE RECENT BIBLICAL ASSEMBLY.

We mean the one held in Charlotte during the latter days of June. It was not as largely attended as some expected. It brought to the "Queen City" a striking array of talented, consecrated workers. That much good was done, no one can doubt. The seed sown will not germinate in a night, but the harvest will be certain and rich. The Assembly deserves full recognition and the practical co-operation of all who love the Lord Jesus in all sincerity and truth. We trust that it will be more successful next year in point of popular interest. We believe that it will be. Such a thing is endorsed by God and utilized by the Holy Ghost. It is bound to succeed as long as men are faithful. The Bible is the one book of this nation. Upon its truths rest all our national hopes and the supremacy of all good. We are glad that it is being studied as never before in the history of the world. It has a secure resting place in the great heart of our American citizenship. It is a significant fact that, in the late war with Spain, the Spanish soldiers expressed surprise that so many of our boys carried the Bible with them into the camp and the fury of battle. Many of those who were killed had their mothers' Bibles next to their hearts. God rest their souls! As long as the Bible and "Old Glory" go together, so long will the "God of nations" smile upon us.

May an annual Biblical Assembly bless our commonwealth, and Heaven-favored be those who have helped to make it a benediction to our people.

ENCOURAGING FACTS.

We have had occasion lately to come to the conclusion that our younger preachers are developing very satisfactorily as preachers. They show very clearly that they are reading and studying—and what is better, praying. They show progress, not by making homiletical excursions into the domain of the so-called higher thought, but by selecting practical and evangelical themes, and preaching the plain old truths of the Gospel with intellectual and spiritual force. Avoiding a spurious and inert conservatism, they evince that evangelical radicalism which holds to the best of the old while advancing to the best of the new. We have noticed, too, that there is a growing earnestness in the presentation of Truth. We have often thought while listening to some men preach that they, on account of their lack of earnestness and their mechanical delivery, would make but a slight impression upon a jury if they were lawyers. It is a good thing, we would say by way of parenthesis, for every preacher to go into a court-house once in a while just to see how earnestly, and often importunately, a lawyer strives

to win his case. The idea of polished, dignified, undemonstrative preaching is taking the life out of our pulpit in some parts of the country. Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is a high duty and privilege, and immortal souls are involved. Red-hot earnestness, attended by strong, enlightened conviction, and receiving stimulus and momentum from the Holy Spirit, is the demand of the hour. We are glad that the preachers whom we have lately heard, bid us feel encouraged. There are exceptions, of course, but the outlook is bright. Close and unremitting study, earnest and untiring prayer, glad and faithful service are not unknown among our preachers. We are glad that this is true.

OUR SCHOOLS.

It would be a good thing, yea, a great thing, if the duty we owe our schools should be clearly defined in the mind and heart of our Methodism. This consummation can never occur until the basis of this duty be plainly seen and firmly established. This duty does not rest upon us as a Conference or as Methodists. It rests upon us as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. A Methodist school is not a thing which simply gives a Conference a certain forceful eclat in the education of its preachers, or merely advances Methodism by teaching her youth; but it is something over which Christ himself presides, and which develops Christian manhood and womanhood.

We may meet as a Conference and pass our resolutions—and forget them in a few weeks. We may as Methodists point proudly to Trinity and our other institutions, and have our minds blinded by secular considerations. But when we as Christians look at these institutions as the exponents of Christ and His principles, we must recognize an obligation which sounds all the depths and scales all the altitudes of duty, and which we cannot repudiate nor deny. So the duty which we owe our schools does not rest upon simply loyalty to Methodism but on love for Christ.

When we place our Christian institutions upon the same plane as the Sunday school, then our duties will be obvious. A Sunday school is not an annex of the church, but an institution in which all, from the little child to the gray-haired man or woman, may be taught the Word of God. So a Christian institution of learning is not a mere foster-child of the church or a protegee of a sub-organization, but an institution for developing the youth of our land into an intelligent, Christian manhood.

God could place the great work of teaching only in the hands of an agent having a knowledge of God's thought, the ability to correctly interpret it, and the Heaven-inspired desire to use it for the attainment of the only true end of education. The Church is the truest educator and the best conservator of the real educational idea. For 3000 years the Church carried the responsibility. The sacred and secular were one. All was God's. To-day, according to common acceptance, the preacher is the one who stands in the pulpit and preaches the Word of God, while the teacher is regarded as one who teaches the thoughts of God as revealed in the book of nature. Yet it should be remembered that the Church is not relieved of its duty of teaching all of God's thoughts wherever revealed, whether in the little log school-house, or in the rude church.

During these vacation days many parents are deciding upon a school for their children. May the foregoing thoughts and others be in their mind. God grant that the coming scholastic year may be the best in the history of Trinity and our other schools.

Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"CORN-STALK FIRES."

This expression does not, perhaps, commend itself to the poetical mind, yet it is wonderful in its typifying power. "Corn-stalk fires" are easily made, and as quickly die down. We have many of this kind in the field of religion.

A certain preacher of the North Carolina Conference preached sometime ago to a large audience, over which a revival wave of the newer sublimated kind had swept, from the text, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." Toward the latter part of the sermon, his congregation was strangely affected. Men, women and children began to laugh, weep, gesticulate, and shout the praises of God. Some were carried out in a state of complete exhaustion. Others lay in a trance. The preacher could not continue his sermon on account of the tumult. With seemingly heaven-born finesse, he turned his efforts in the direction of taking up a missionary collection. He wanted eight-teen dollars for those who have not the Gospel. But the frantic crowd evidently scorned the idea of descending the mount of their "transfiguration" to take up the prosaic duty of obeying their Lord's last request on earth. They continued to shout while the almost empty hat went around. The preacher, after all his exhortation, succeeded in getting only a small part of the amount asked for.

We heard once at a camp-meeting a sermon from one of our best men and strongest preachers. At the conclusion of the sermon, a "son of thunder"—but a holy man and now in heaven—arose to exhort. Many of the congregation were worked into a frenzy. The scene was almost a pandemonium. Children were weeping, while men and women were leaping and shouting. In our simplicity, we prophesied a grand time for the afternoon service. We saw prospectively penitents flocking to the altars, and heard the shouts in the camp of Israel. Nothing seemingly but dead apathy. The fire had burned down. Hardly any ashes could be seen.

Such instances as the above could be multiplied. The times demand that our people should learn well the difference between spiritual power and a frothy emotionalism. Spiritual power is attended by emotional phenomena of some kind. We have seen noise and power go together. But true spiritual power not only appeals to the emotions, but is attended by a completer equipment for, and a livelier stimulus to, a practical and Christ-reaching service. Benignity and blessing must go together. When our hearts overflow some other heart must catch the surplus. The fire of the Holy Ghost burns bright and long. No rains of a varied experience can extinguish it.

In the former instance cited, there was a lad who remained practically unmoved in the midst of the shouting and tumult. After the happy ones had exhausted their little store-houses of liberality, he turned to the preacher and said, "Preacher, I'll give you a dollar for the heathen. I hav'n't got it now, but I'll work for it until I get it." Here was the evidence of spiritual power. The boy felt the impact of that eloquent gospel sermon. The wave which shattered itself against the self-centered hearts of those noisy ecclesiastical Epicurians gathered its force and swept the silent lad into the very presence of the Eternal One. The fire which burned in his heart did not leap and roar, but it had a heat which fused the rougher elements of his nature and brought out the pure gold. He felt the touch of God, and his heart burned with love for sinning and dying men.

Let us realize what true spiritual power is. Let us distinguish between spiritual exaltation and religious dissipation. We know a man who, years ago, was about to sink beneath the waves of life's storm-lashed sea of sin. Christ came walking on the water, and all was peace. Christ-possessed and Christ-possessing, this man

faced the sunrise of a new day, with the noble ambition to reap for Jesus many golden sheaves before the dying of the day. But alas, it was not his lot to "wield his sickle in the ripening fields." Among the shadows, he sat down to talk for and with his Master. With the daggers of disease piercing his body, parrying the thrusts of an old appetite which had nearly destroyed him, listening to the wolf of poverty howling at his door, awaiting the final and apparently early summons, he strikes from the harp of his sweet and buoyant faith a melody which rings all over the State. He may at times get happy "in meeting" and roll on the billows of ecstatic joy. But we know that the truest baptisms of spiritual power come to him in the quietude of his daily conflict, in the watchings of the night-time, and in his constant breaking of the alabaster box at the feet of the Master.

God in War and Providence.

BY S. P. RICHARDSON.

There are but two ways to govern men and nations. The one is to appeal to their reason and moral sense. The Lord said to the Israelitish nation, "Come now and let us reason together." The other is to appeal to their fears and danger of punishment. The child must fear the rod until it gets old enough to be controlled by reason. The history of the Israelitish nation, as recorded in the Bible, and Josephus, is but a history of God's dealings with men and nations. God deals with nations as he deals with individuals. To one he gives five talents, to another two, and to the other one. He adds to those who improve their talents, and takes from those who bury theirs. Humanity was made to grow, and man's Creator has wisely furnished him with the means of growth. Man was not finished in creation, but complete in his endless possibilities.

The recent war between the United States and Spain, the manner in which it was begun and conducted, with its far-reaching results, furnishes food for profound thought and action, both by church and state. The American people had no prejudice or hatred of the Spanish nation, nor any special regard for the people of those islands. The real, underlying principle of the American mind was to make peace by arresting the suffering of those people and the devastation of those grand islands. The American government had not the remotest idea that those islands would be thrown on its hands to be taken care of, and looked after in their future destiny. Without much effort or sacrifice of blood, the Spanish rule has been retired, and the American government don't think it either wise or just to recognize those insurgent organizations. Therefore the United States finds those islands in her hands under military control. The recent discussion in Congress was most unfortunate. It gave encouragement to the insurgents, left the people in the islands in a state of unrest as to their future, and discounted our nationality abroad. But the Divine providence seems to have moved straightforward in the midst of all opposition to accomplish His ends. A man must be a very superficial observer who cannot see God in His providence in nations as in individuals. He chose the Israelitish nation to reveal His law and worship to mankind. "Who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law and the service of God."

England, in her aggressive forces, has done more to civilize and Christianize mankind than all the other nations. Wherever, in the ends of the earth the English flag goes, the open Bible, prayer-book and personal, civil, religious liberty go. She opened the Celestial empire to the gospel at the mouth of the cannon.

It is said the United States government is the best in the world, and so it is. We say nothing about party spirit in politics, and many other evils, but the government in the shortest time has neutralized all national prejudices and unified all nationalities, and developed the very highest forms of personality in the world, whether in war or in peace. If this is true, then all people are justly entitled to the same blessings, and every friend of humanity ought to give his influence to extend civil and religious freedom to the ends of the earth. Whatever promises or pledges the government has made, the new order of things abrogates all those

former pledges, and there is now but one way open for the government, and that is clearly to annex those islands as territories, and deal with them accordingly.

The Christian public ought to rise up in their God-given strength at once and send five hundred missionaries as teachers to those islands. This would help the State to an early settlement of all the affairs of government in those islands.

Over ten millions of people are now open to the churches and teachers for salvation. It may be replied, the Catholic Church has been there. That is true. Slavery can elevate a savage to a certain point, but beyond that in slavery there is no room for growth, so can the Spanish government and the Catholic Church elevate a savage race to a certain altitude, but beyond that there is no room for further development. In fact, the government of Spain and the Catholic Church have been in the way of progress on those islands. They have made but little advance in the last hundred years.

There is no place now in the higher and more advanced civilization for the Catholic Church. Wherever the American flag is unfurled, there will be found an open Bible and civil and religious liberty.

I can't see how any patriot who enjoys these blessings can vote against giving them to others. I am no politician, and belong to no political party. Some of our Congressmen who oppose the annexation of those islands to the United States remind me of my youngest boy. When about five years old he came into the room where his mother was having a carpet tacked down. He took in the movement, and asked his mother if the Lord did not have a barrel of tacks? His mother asked him what use the Lord had for tacks. He said to keep his sky nailed down. His world was confined to his little horizon (the reader can make the application.)

This great nation can't crawl into her shell and ignore the claims of men and nations. The United States, without intending, has done more in the past year than ever before, to impress upon the nations the grandeur of her government, the intelligence and courage of her people, and the vastness of her resources. The United States is obliged to take her place as a nation and meet her national obligations, and in the providence of God aid in the civil and religious freedom to the ignorant and down-trodden of all people.

The people of the United States don't want to annex these islands to enrich themselves, but to better the condition of those islanders by giving them a better civilization, better government, and a better form of religion. If they are annexed, then they will be a part of the nation, and no good can come to the nation that will not come to those islanders. They will be a part of the United States. The annexation of those islands will make the geography of the nation complete, having all soils, all climates, and all products produced on the globe, from the icy north to the sunny tropics. The nation needs the products of those islands; coffee, sugar, the finest timber in the world, and all tropical fruits.

The resources of those islands are endless. It is seed time and harvest all the year. The tropics extend about twenty-eight hundred miles across the center of the earth. The Creator planted humanity in the tropics, and by this annexation the United States will add about 300,000 square miles to her territory, and over ten millions to her population. I write understandingly, having lived near the tropics. Much is said about the burning sun of the tropics and climatic conditions. I know it is not as hot in Havana in mid-summer as it is in Atlanta or New York. The people are not subject to half so many diseases, and thus live much longer. I have spent many years in all parts of Florida. I never saw nor heard of a case of sunstroke or of any one being overcome by heat. I lived two years within forty miles of the tropics. I never saw the thermometer but once above ninety, and only twice below sixty. As you approach the equator every schoolboy ought to know that the days and nights become more nearly of a length and the twilight shorter, as you approach the tropics. If these islands are permanently annexed to the United States, in less than five years more than a million of Europeans and American citizens will go there, and in less than twenty years the islands will be made an earthly paradise.—*Wesleyan Christian Advocate.*